



HAVING A SAY ON SPENDING

Report by Lee Watton

THOUSANDS of people are to have their say on Dudley Council's controversial budget plans.

The move comes as the authority looks to make £20 million worth of cuts over the next three years.

Under the proposals Dudley Museum and Art Gallery would close and up to 275 jobs would be axed. Library opening hours could be cut with public toilets, dog bins and gritting lorries also in the firing line.

Proposals also include a council tax increase of just under two per cent, the equivalent of 43p a week for a band D property.

Bosses say the authority is facing unprecedented cuts in funding from the Government and needs to dramatically change the way it delivers services.

The council has now launched its annual The Big Question consultation, asking residents for their views on the proposed budget.

More than 6,000 residents took part last year and more are expected to do so this time around. It will run for 12 weeks until January 31.

Residents will be able to take part through the council's website at www.dudley.gov.uk or by using #DudleyBudget on Twitter.

People can also pick up hard copy versions of the consultation from borough libraries and Dudley Council Plus in Castle Street, Dudley.

Innovative

Cabinet member for finance, Councillor David Sparks, said: "Over the past two years, the number of people who have taken part in our Big Question consultations has been bigger than any other budget consultation ever held by Dudley Council."

"These are unprecedented times for any local authority as our funding continues to be reduced from the Government, and we have to look at new and innovative ways of delivering services."

"This year's Big Question is very much about finding out what services people think can be delivered in another form, by the community and voluntary sector."

Councillor Sparks said the savings are needed in response to a £65m reduction in Government funding since 2010.

For 2015/16 Dudley's Revenue Support Grant, its main source of Government funding, reduced by £61 per person.

At a recent meeting, the council's controlling Labour group came under fire over the cuts. Conservative leader, Councillor Patrick Harley, said the authority should have been better prepared to ensure such severe cuts, affecting frontline services, were not necessary.



Councillor David Sparks

Arrest after man fatally injured by car Fountain now flows again after 60 years

A 19-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving after a pedestrian was killed in Netherton.

Paramedics were called to a 53-year-old man found in a critical condition near the junction of Marriot Road and Cradley Road at 11.45pm on Friday. He was found in the road near to an abandoned car which had crashed into fencing. Passers-by stopped to help the man but he was confirmed dead at the scene.

Sergeant Paul Hughes, of the Collision Investigation Unit at West Midlands Police, said: "We believe that the man was a pedestrian who was hit by the car. Checks on the silver grey Seat Ibiza have revealed that the abandoned car was uninsured and unregistered."

A West Midlands Ambulance spokeswoman said ambulance staff took over after arriving to find passers-by performing excellent CPR on the injured man. But he had sustained multiple injuries and, despite advanced life support continuing at the roadside, the man could not be saved.

Anyone with information should contact police on 101.

MORE than 60 years after water last ran through Dudley town centre's famous fountain, it is flowing once again.

The landmark fountain in Dudley market place has undergone a major renovation to allow the water to run again after decades of being dry.

The impressive monument has been a fixture of the High Street for 150 years and on Friday deputy mayor Councillor Mohammed Hanif launched the new-looking fountain.

He said: "It's really great to see the centre of Dudley up and running and brought back to its former glory. I'm delighted for the people of Dudley."

Keeper of the fountain Iris Reed and Michael Forsyth, the great nephew of its designer James Forsyth, were among guests for the ceremony.

The project has included renovation of the water basins, new pipe work, restoration of statues and a replacement for the missing tiered fountain in the central archway.

Historic photographs and written references were used to help restore the missing elements of the fountain.

Caparo boss dies in fall from luxury flat



Caparo Industries boss Angad Paul pictured with his wife Michelle Bonn, who he married in 2004, arriving at an event in London

Family firm tragedy

THE future of crisis-hit industrial giant Caparo faces further turmoil after its boss fell to his death from his London penthouse.

Angad Paul, aged 45, the son of Caparo founder Lord Paul of Marylebone, was found dead on Sunday at the rear of the exclusive apartment building in Portland Place he shared with his family.

Police say that his death is not being treated as suspicious.

Mr Paul was due to visit the Black County last week but did not attend the scheduled meeting with administrators PwC and Walsall South MP Valerie Vaz at Caparo Atlas Fastenings site in Heath Road, Darlaston.

His father, who has been chan-

cellor of the University of Wolverhampton since 1999, had been due to visit Wolverhampton University today (Thu).

Mr Paul's death comes just two weeks after administrators were called into Caparo, the £370m-a-year business that employed 1,700 workers across the Black Country.

The move has already seen 323 jobs go across the region, with the likelihood of more to follow.

Mr Paul took over as chief executive of the firm in 1996.

Caparo went into administration last month, leading to job losses as plants in Dudley, Cradley Heath, Oldbury, Darlaston and West Bromwich were hit.

COURT

Mosque dispute cost will be nearly £1m

COSTS linked to the court battle over a proposed new mosque in Dudley, which seems to have finally reached an end after ten years, will total around £1 million.

Dudley Muslim Association's plans were dealt a major blow after judges ruled in favour of Dudley Council's bid to take back the land (see pages 3 and 6).

Association officials say they have already forked out more than £750,000 in legal and planning fees. Now they will have to cover the council's legal bill, thought to run into six figures. The Court of Appeal is yet to rule on the exact costs

SPEED

Slow down sign to warn motorists

A ROAD safety campaign by residents concerned about speeding drivers along a road in Sedgley has prompted highways bosses to bring in new measures.

A vehicle-activated sign which flashes to warn cars going over the speed limit to slow down will be placed in Northway, near its junction with Manderley Close.

Northway Action Group called for more safety measures after clocking 42 speeding motorists in one hour.

TRANSPORT

Nuisance parkers handed £100 fines

MORE than 500 fines have been handed to motorists parking badly at railway and metro stations in the Black Country.

Since January, 514 Penalty Charge Notices, each with a fine of £100, have been given out at Centro's six park and ride sites. Most of the fines — 230 in total — were issued at Stourbridge Junction.

But the numbers appear to be falling since an initial surge in January and February saw 114 drivers penalised.

At Sandwell and Dudley rail station 184 fines were handed out this year. There were also 31 at Rowley Regis and 20 at Coseley in the blitz on nuisance parking.

INSIDE

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It's a roaring return for Jetpur the Lion



Jetpur is back at Dudley Zoo

LOOK who's the mane attraction at Dudley Zoo – Asiatic Lion Jetpur has made a roaring return to his birthplace. The 12-year-old was born at the zoo in 2003 and has spent the past 10 years overseas – at Mulhouse Zoo in France. But now he's back in the Black Country and bosses are bursting with pride to have a male joining nine-year-old females Kyra and Asha. They hope they will settle well together and breed in time.

Jetpur, who weighs 223kg, arrived earlier this month. Dudley Zoo curator, Richard Brown,

said: "Jetpur is settling in well. We will be looking to get him into a routine and hope to introduce him to Kyra and Asha later in the week. "We are quite positive they will get along well."

Cubs

Jetpur was born on July 6, 2003, and moved to Mulhouse Zoo, in Mulhouse, near Strasbourg on the German and Swiss borders, nearly two years later to form a breeding pair with lioness Sita. They have had 10 cubs as part of an international programme.

It is now hoped that Jetpur will continue to breed after his return home to the Castle Hill attraction. Zoo section leader Jay Haywood said: "Lions eat every other day and Jetpur will have up to 10kg of meat every other day, given to him in joints. "In between he is given rabbits, quail and chickens and it is also important he eats the bones, feathers and fur in order to keep his internal organs healthy." Asiatic lions are smaller and lighter than their African counterparts and have a shaggier coat with a distinctive fold of skin that runs along the belly.

Bored residents concern care home inspectors

MEDICINES not administered properly, sickness levels among staff and residents 'bored' with the few activities available – these were among concerns in a report on a care home in Dudley.

Nethercrest Residential Home, in Brewster Street, Netherton, was ranked as requiring improvement by the Care Quality Commission following an inspection.

In their report inspectors said that the home needs to get better in all areas – safety, effectiveness, care, responsiveness and leadership.

The home's management of residents' medicines was criticised with staff failings meaning some people didn't get the prescriptions they needed.

The report stated: "Medicines were not consistently administered as prescribed. We found errors in the arrangements for managing people's medicines which had led to some people not having their medicines. "The provider had input from other agencies to improve their management of medicines but had not sustained this. Timely action was not evident where people refused their medicines or where stock had run out which could compromise people's health."

Reviewing

Nethercrest head of operations Julie Wright said a new leadership team had been installed and the home was reviewing all areas of care.

The level of staffing at the home was also questioned in the report, which said that sickness absences left it stretched.

The report said: "People told us there was not enough to occupy them. Some pre-planned activities had taken place but the frequency of these was limited. People told us they were bored."

The report continued: "Although the ownership of the home had recently changed and the provider had a programme for improvement, they had not sustained some of the new initiatives recently implemented."

Julie Wright said: "We are extremely disappointed with the findings, but can confirm that over recent weeks a new management team has been put in place."

Cannon is back in pride of place



Engineers carefully haul the century-old cannon back into position by the war memorial at Brierley Hill

A LANDMARK cannon once again has pride of place in front of the war memorial in Brierley Hill after being restored to its former glory in time for Remembrance Day.

There were fears earlier this year when the cannon went missing from its spot that it had been stolen. But it emerged it had been removed from its long-standing position on Church Hill by Dudley Council so they could spruce it up.

Its return last week was hampered slightly as the crane brought

in to lift it into place was not big enough. But a new machine arrived on site to carry out the work as planned.

Officials said some delicate work was needed with the crane to get it back in exactly the right position on its plinth. Restoration of the cannon cost between £2,000 and £3,000.

Dudley Council engineer Roger Brooks said: "Seeing the cannon restored to its proper place is a wonderful culmination of the pro-

ject for us. The cannon is a very important part of Brierley Hill's heritage and I know a lot of people in the town will be very glad to see it back in place.

"It was always the intention to have it back in position in time for Remembrance services and we have been able to achieve that."

The cannon was presented by Bailey Pegg to the town following the Siege of Mafeking, the most famous British action in the Second Boer War.

BMet college closing two sites in bid to save money

A CASH-STRAPPED college which runs campuses in the Black Country is closing two sites, a Government review has revealed.

Birmingham Metropolitan College's perilous financial state was highlighted in a review by Further Education Commissioner Doctor David Collins, with the next few months deemed 'critical' to its chance of recovering.

The college – which has campuses in Stourbridge, Brierley Hill, Great Barr and Kidderminster – has closed its Language Centre in Highgate, Birmingham and sold a property in Castle Vale. It has not been suggested that any Black Country sites are under threat at this stage.

College bosses were commended for their efforts to resolve its financial problems.

"Until early 2015 the standard of financial management and control in the college was not acceptable," said Dr Collins. In a letter to college bosses, Skills and Equalities Minister Nick Boles wrote: "Although the college now has in place the expected policies and process in order to achieve quality and financial recovery, the next few months will be critical to determine whether or not financial recovery can be achieved."

Principal Andrew Cleaves said: "We are pleased that the FE Commissioner has recognised all the hard work that has been done over the past few months. Since spring we have significantly reduced expenditure and undertaken a successful voluntary severance programme."

Crunch talks over one-way system

A CRUNCH meeting will take place to decide whether to make any changes to two problem roads in Upper Gornal.

Dudley Council unveiled proposals to introduce one-way traffic in Vale Street and Hill Street last month and undertaken a consultation with residents.

The findings will be revealed at a meeting today (Thu).

Ward councillor Dean Perks said the one-way schemes had met with a mixed reaction, explaining: "There was support for the one-way system but not in the way the council proposed it. People wanted Vale Street to be one-way but not Hill Street."

Under the proposals Vale Street would only be open to northbound traffic for a section near the Ruiton Windmill.

Power tools stolen from van in village

POWER tools were stolen from a vehicle parked in Hagley, near Stourbridge.

Thieves prised open the vehicle's back doors in Wassell Grove Lane and made off with the tools between 3pm and 3.45pm last Thursday. Call West Mercia Police on 101.

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One group only with scheme for old theatre

ONLY one group has come forward to submit plans to save Dudley Hippodrome from demolition after a fresh drive to find backers.

Campaigners from the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome group are part of the only group to have come forward with revised plans for the theatre.

This came despite the council claiming six early inquiries had been made to express interests in taking over the venue in Castle Hill.

A deadline for last Friday had been tabled by the council for groups or individuals behind those inquires to submit formal proposals.

An independent assessor will now analyse the friends' group proposal in the coming weeks.

Dudley Council has set a deadline to take a final decision over the Hippodrome's future by the end of the year.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, who is in charge of economic developments in the borough, confirmed the council wanted to find a resolution to the scheme.

He said: "We have received one proposal which will be looked at by an independent assessor before we make a final decision by the end of the year."

Businessman Gary Blick has worked with the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome group to present its proposals once again.

Group chairman, Gordon Downing, said the group submitted a similar proposal to a previous plan but extra technical details the council had requested were also submitted with the scheme.

Historian and all that jazz at church

HISTORIAN and raconteur John Sparry will be presenting an evening of jazz music at a church in Stourbridge.

Mr Sparry, who is a musician and Wall Heath bookshop owner, is holding the event at St James's Church, in Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston on Saturday. It will feature music interspersed with anecdotes from vibraphone player Mr Sparry. Playing alongside Mr Sparry will be Barry Watts on drums, Jim Sutton on bass and Henry Newman keyboards.

The concert is organised by the Stourbridge-based not-for-profit group Local & Live.

The concert starts at 7.30pm and tickets, priced £9, are available on the door. It's free for under-18s.

Howzat for cricket club's quiz night?

LYE Cricket Club is holding a quiz night in its pavilion off Stourbridge Road tomorrow (Fri) from 7.30pm. It is open to teams from club members and the public. To find out more visit the website www.lyecrickclub.co.uk

Actor Kascion to turn on Christmas lights



Rising star actor Kascion Franklin

A BLACK Country actor who played the starring role in Sir Lenny Henry's drama Danny and the Human Zoo will switch on Dudley's Christmas lights.

Kascion Franklin, from Wednesbury, has the honour of launching the annual festive celebration.

The 27-year-old played the lead role in the TV drama which was screened in August and received favourable reviews. Written by Sir Lenny, it was a fictionalised account drawing upon his early life as a teenager in Dudley.

Kascion said: "It's a real honour to

be asked to switch on the lights. It's nice to give back to Dudley in my own little way, as it played a part in the first big thing in my career."

A brand new lighting system has been installed in the town centre as part of the multi-million pound market place redevelopment.

The switch-on takes place on Saturday at 5pm. Before that spectacular moment, there will be five hours of fun in Stone Street Square and Churchill Shopping Centre, including funfair rides, cookery demonstrations and a visit from Father Christmas.

Meanwhile, the cast of Danny and the Human Zoo have received a Movie Screen and TV Award (MVSA) for their work on the acclaimed drama. The one-off production won the award for best TV film.

It was filmed in the Black Country and based loosely around Sir Lenny's experiences growing up in Dudley and on the comedy circuit in the 1970s.

The Black Country actor, writer and comic, who last week won the Paving The Way honour at the Mobo Awards, said he plans to 'tell more stories about the Midlands'.

Council 'caved in' to pressure over mosque

MUSLIM leaders claim Dudley Council bosses 'caved in' to opposition — including pressure from far right groups — to block its plans for a new mosque in the town.

Dudley Muslim Association (DMA) has spent a decade bidding to build a mosque on overgrown disused land in Hall Street. But its plan has been left in tatters after the Court of Appeal ruled last week that it has to hand the site back to the council.

Five far right protests have been held in Dudley since 2010 over the issue, including three by the England Defence League. Three protests took place this year but faced strong opposition from the council, community leaders, traders and police over the disruption in the town centre. A unity event was held to show Dudley's multi-cultural community spirit.

Dudley Muslim Association spokesman Amjid Raza said he believed the protests had not influenced the decision of judges but brought 'bad publicity' to the mosque bid.

"The project was quite high-profile and and there was quite a lot of bad publicity," he said. "Faced with vociferous opposition from various groups, the Dudley leadership at all levels caved in."

Ambition

"This leadership can regrettably take pride in preventing an otherwise respectful and co-operative community from fulfilling its ambition to build up-to-date premises in Hall Street."

"We are sorry to our community that we were unable to fulfil their dream of a replacement mosque and community centre. Our community will now need a period of calm reflection and consider its future progress."

"We would sincerely like to thank profoundly all our fellow citizens who supported us and stood with us in our endeavours to build a new mosque and facilities."

Lords Justices Lewison and Treacy and Lady Justice Gloster unanimously ruled that the contract should be respected and the council was entitled to return of the land.

Lord Justice Lewison told the court the case was a 'sad story'. In his judgement he said: "It is to be hoped that further cooperation between the parties will result in the identification and acquisition of an alternative site on which the new mosque can be built."

● Mosque saga — see page 6



The Guest Hospital site in Tipton Road, Dudley, is to get an £18m revamp creating more than 150 homes by developer Wates Living Space

Homes to be built at Guest hospital

WORK has started on the £18 million revamp of a landmark former hospital site in Dudley.

Developer Wates Living Space has begun to overhaul the Guest Hospital site in Tipton Road where 157 homes are to be built.

Construction is being carried out by Wates, alongside Dudley Council and the Homes and Communities Agency, with completion in summer 2019.

Two historic buildings from the hospital — the administration block and the porter's lodge — will be converted into housing as part of the project.

Other buildings will be demolished to make way for houses and flats.

A total of 118 homes will be sold while 39 will be available for rent through the council. Councillor Gave Partridge, cabinet member for housing, said: "This is an extremely welcome and exciting regeneration project."

"It will enable the provision of more affordable housing for our residents and bring an historic building back into use offering luxury apartments."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Venue is to name bar after Tommy

BLACK Country comedian Tommy Munden will be honoured by having a room at an entertainment venue in Dudley named after him.

The bar at Dudley Town Hall is set to be renamed the Tommy Munden Lounge in honour of the Halesowen-born funnyman, who died last year, and a portrait will be unveiled by Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho to commemorate the popular comic. Councillor Waltho said: "Tommy Munden achieved legendary status and it is only right we honour him and his work."

Homes proposed for former garden

HOMES will be built by the transformation of an existing house and garden in Dudley under proposals before the council.

The property in Stourbridge Road will be partly demolished to create space for the new mini-estate.

KP Properties Developments has plans for the land near St Augustine's Church, at Holly Hall.

The existing house would be partly knocked down and re-designed as a three-bedroom property. Eight three-bedroom homes would be created in the garden under proposals.

Double the fun in vintage comedy

TWO classic 1930s comedies featuring Laurel & Hardy are being shown on the big screen in Dudley.

The Music Box, in which the hapless duo deliver a piano, and Block-Heads which finds Stan still fighting the First World War until Ollie rescues him, will be shown in high definition for the first time at the Showcase Cinema, Castlegate Way. The double feature will be shown at 2pm on Sunday and again at 7.30pm on Tuesday. See www.laurelandhardyroadshow.co.uk

Carol singers needed for community event

DUDLEY Council for Voluntary Service is looking for musicians and singers to take part in a community carol singing event in Brierley Hill.

The singing in the town centre will follow the organisation's Christmas fair in Brierley Hill Civic Hall from 4.30pm on Saturday, December 5.

Anyone who wishes to take part can visit the Dudley CVS office in Albion St, Brierley Hill, or for more details about the event or the organisation call (01384) 573381.

Past and presents

SEDGLEY Local History Society will be holding a talk on Christmas past to Christmas present.

Speaker Mary Bodfish will look at traditions and customs for the festive season through the ages at St Andrew's Church, Bilston Street, on November 12 at 7.30pm. Admission £1.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



SUPERSTITIONS For our time. A reader tells me that, just as actors avoid the word "Macbeth" by referring to "The Scottish Play," he and his wife have grown wary of mentioning the name of their local furniture establishment. It is simply "The Swedish Store." I bet that could catch on.

IN some versions of this column the cost of the HS2 railway appeared as £60 million. If only. The true cost is £60 billion, or if you prefer, £60,000 million. If you can cope with all the zeros, it's actually £60,000,000,000 or about £1 billion per mile. Confused? I think that is what they want.

HOW insurance works: A friend who always parked his car on his drive is moving to a house with a garage. So he told his insurance company of the change and asked by how much his premium would be reduced, in view of the added security of parking in a garage. The woman at the insurance company explained that there's no reduction but he would be charged a £26 admin fee for notifying them of the change.

SO farewell, Colin Welland, who has died aged 81. I saw him on stage once and it was a memorable performance. It wasn't a play but a political rally. Welland was at Birmingham Town Hall in May 1987 speaking at a pre-election meeting in support of Neil Kinnock and Labour. The former Z-Cars star predicted that this time Labour would win. "The Tories will be so far behind," Welland thundered, "that all they'll see is our big fat arse."



The audience loved it. Welland then introduced Kinnock "honestly and with utter conviction, the next prime minister of Britain." As it happened, Kinnock managed to lose not only the 1987 election but the 1992 one, too. Great oratory is a wonderful thing but if the voters don't trust you, it's just words.

IF it is proved that an Islamist bomb brought down the Russian airliner in Sinai, I would not care to be living in Raqqa this week. The Russians are not known for their kid gloves. In the 1990s Chechnya wars, in response to terrorist bombs, Russia shelled, mortared and carpet-bombed the enemy capital Grozny until it was, as the United Nations put it, "the most destroyed city on earth." Raqqa is the Syrian city which has become the capital of Islamic State and a honeypot for hundreds of brainwashed Muslims from Britain. How long before the nightmare which haunted us during 40 years of the Cold War comes true, and Russian bombs kill British citizens?

TERMS for our time. "The doily of death." A spider's web, as described on Autumnwatch (BBC1)

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Government urged to help Caparo staff

THE Government must act to ensure more than 300 Black Country workers who lost their jobs at steel giant Caparo are able to get back into work, says Labour Deputy Leader and West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson.

Workers at sites in Cradley Heath, Oldbury, Dudley, West Bromwich and Darlaston were told by administrators last week that they were

being made redundant with immediate effect.

Around 50 former and current Caparo employees were invited to the Job Centre in West Bromwich High Street or the Job Centre in Temple Street, Wolverhampton.

Caparo Atlas Fastenings in Heath Road, Darlaston was worst hit with 122 workers made redundant. A total of 68 jobs have gone at Caparo Preci-

sion Tubes in Oldbury, as well as 64 at Caparo Forging Europe in Dudley, 59 at Fairbright Wire in West Bromwich and 10 at the Cradley Heath CMT Engineering plant. The Darlaston, Dudley and West Bromwich sites closed with immediate effect.

Mr Watson put the onus on the Government to support those left jobless after years of service to the company.

He said: "This is devastating news for employees and their families. My thoughts are with them.

"The Government must act immediately to ensure all those affected are given the help they need to find new jobs, including financial assistance to retrain, if necessary. These are highly-skilled workers that our region and our country cannot afford to lose."

Council's top earners paid more than £1m

By Richard Guttridge

DUDLEY Council's top 10 earners take home a total of more than a million pounds a year.

This comes at a time the authority plans to shut the town's museum and art gallery and axe up to 275 jobs.

The chief executive's salary has increased to more than £160,000. Sarah Norman currently holds the chief executive role after John Polychronakis retired last year.

The council is trying to make savings of £20 million over the next three years. Bosses have said another £50m of savings will still likely be needed even if its current proposals for cuts go through.

Finance boss Councillor David Sparks said cuts to services such as the museum, as well as reducing opening hours at libraries and at the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley, were necessary to avoid the authority going bankrupt.

Policy

According to the council's pay policy statement for 2015, the chief executive is paid between £160,000 and £165,000 a year, an increase from £157,000.

The strategic director for people's services takes home £127,000, plus an £18,000 'statutory postholder allowance' for being both Director Children's Services and Director Adult Social Services. Another strategic director earns £117,000, plus a £10,000 postholder allowance, while a third strategic director earns £117,000. Eight chief officers are paid £90,780.

Bosses at the Labour-controlled authority have decided to take on a 'senior public health intelligence analyst', earning more than £30,000. Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group has put £25,000 towards the new post, while £15,000 will come from the council's health budget.

Leader Councillor Pete Lowe said: "We now have one of the leanest senior management structures in the country which makes us more efficient than ever before."

Closure will force artists out of town



Shirley Bonas with exhibition program secretary Keith Turley during a past Dudley Society of Artists display

DUDLEY Society of Artists says its latest exhibition could be its last in the town due to the closure of Dudley Museum and Art Gallery.

Members are desperate for the venue, where they have held their annual exhibition for 87 years, to stay open.

The exhibition will return to the museum and art gallery on Saturday but once it comes to an end in February, they face finding a new venue.

Dudley Council is proposing closing the building, at Priory Street since 1883, and move its collections elsewhere. It is among cuts aiming to save £20 million over the next three years.

The decision has sparked backlash from the public,

with more than three thousand people signing a petition calling for the venue to be saved.

Susie Griffiths, president of the Dudley Society of Artists, said she was hopeful the council could be persuaded to change its mind.

She fears if the museum and gallery does close, the society could be forced to move its exhibition out of the town.

She said: "We are trying to get as many people as we can to sign the petition, we are encouraging all our members to do it.

"We are very upset about it, we have been holding our exhibition there for 87 years. There is nowhere else for us to go, apart from maybe Wolverhampton."

Asylum — burden is unfair on this region

ONE in three asylum seekers are being sent to the West Midlands, says a leading migration boss.

Roger Lawrence, chairman of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, said the region is 'shouldering an unfair burden'.

Mr Lawrence, leader of Wolverhampton council, said: "We believe that around one-third of all claimants nationally are being accommodated in the West Midlands.

"I am asking the Home Office to look again at the number of local authorities that asylum seekers are currently dispersed to. A small number are shouldering an unfair burden."

The Home Office won't disclose numbers of asylum seekers or the locations of accommodation for their 'protection and privacy'.

Official figures show the number in Sandwell was 695, in Wolverhampton 645, Walsall 234, and in Dudley 226. In Birmingham there were 1,400.

Patrick Harley, leader of the Conservative opposition on Dudley Council, added: "We want to see all areas take their fair share."

Mike Bird, leader of Walsall Council, said: "It is not right that the Black Country and West Midlands are housing more asylum seekers than other areas. We have a long waiting lists for housing as it is." Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper said the area will refuse to take any more migrants or asylum seekers until other parts of the country take more, adding: "Wealthier areas have to take their fair share too."

Village festival in £10k centre boost

AROUND £10,000 has been raised by a music festival to help fund a new community centre in Hagley.

Hagfest 2015 was held in the village in the summer and featured 10 local bands, school groups and attractions.

Hagley Parish Council and the existing Hagley Community Centre members have formed a team who are responsible for the project. Preliminary designs have options for a two-storey building which would accommodate more groups.

Organiser Fran Evans said: "We only had four months to organise the event, including raising sponsorship, getting a premises licence, sourcing and booking suppliers as well as organizing the bands."

Next year's festival is scheduled for July 2.

Neat dance idea to celebrate West End

A DANCE school is preparing to stage its tribute to famous West End shows in Brierley Hill. Neat Feet School of Dance is performing Magic of the Musicals on November 28 with 2pm and 6pm shows at Brierley Hill Civic Hall. Call Lynne Rowell on (01384) 423496.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Beer of the year judging at festival

JUDGING for the Campaign for Real Ale's West Midlands beer of the year will take place at the annual Dudley Winter Ales Fair.

The event, run by the Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of Camra, will feature more than 70 real ales. It is running from November 26 to 28 in Dudley Town Hall.

The entrance package of £15 on Thursday and Friday will include £9.50 of beer tokens and £2 refundable commemorative glass. On Saturday entrance includes £13 worth of tokens and the £2 refundable glass hire.

Companies sign up for jobs fair

A JOBS fair is being held in Brierley Hill this afternoon (Thu), organised by Dudley South MP Mike Wood with 40 companies and organisations taking part.

It is being held at Cable Plaza, at Waterfront West, from 2pm to 6pm.

Among the companies already signed up to take part are London Midland, Eon, Virgin Trains, Dudley College, McDonalds, the Royal Navy, Royal Army Engineers and Barclays.

Mr Wood said many of the firms would either be recruiting or offering training opportunities.

Singing spaceman to land at venue

CANADIAN astronaut Chris Hadfield, whose performance of David Bowie's Space Oddity on the International Space Station became an internet sensation, is coming to Birmingham. An Evening with Chris Hadfield takes place in Symphony Hall on January 19 at 7.30pm. He will be giving an illustrated talk about his experiences during five months in space aboard the ISS and performing songs including Space Oddity. Tickets start at £28 plus fee. See www.thsh.co.uk

Bloody opera show is cut-throat business

STEPHEN Sondheim's murderous musical masterpiece Sweeney Todd is being brought to Birmingham Hippodrome later this month.

Welsh National Opera, as part of their 'Madness' themed autumn season, will stage the gory revenge musical from November 19 to 21, relocating the story from the early Victorian era to the 1980s. German tenor David Amserger will play the demon barber, whose unfortunate customers end up in meat pies.

Strictly hall dancing

STOURBRIDGE Town Hall is offering ballroom, Latin American and sequence dancing tuition.

Sessions take place on Wednesday from 1 to 3.45pm and 7.30-10.30pm.

Afternoon sessions cost £3 and evening sessions £3.50. Contact Fiona Bennett on (01384) 243451.

Community on patrol in bid to deter the crooks

A COMMUNITY crime awareness group has held its first night-time patrol in an effort to deter vandals.

Wordsley Street Watch was set up to tackle rising crime rates and anti-social behaviour in the area. It held its first evening patrol last Thursday. Street Watch co-ordinator, Councillor Derrick Hemingsley, said: "Members of the public gave us a very positive response. It was a success and we will now add night patrols to our future patrols."

The group organises rounds around the town and flags up any concerns with police. Supporters are hoping the group can expand in the forthcoming weeks so they can put on extra patrols in the area.

Issues

The group aims to provide reassurance to the community, as well as engaging with them to discover those issues causing concern in a bid to reduce anti-social behaviour in Wordsley.

By increasing a visible presence in the area, the group also aims to prevent crimes by making crooks think twice.

In the three months up to September, the number of crimes in the town rose by 17 per cent, prompting extra police patrols and the street watch initiative.

For more information about the group, or to volunteer to join them, call Councillor Hemingsley on 07771 977746 or email cllr.derrick.hemingsley@dudleymbc.org.uk

Have Euro say at public meeting

A PUBLIC meeting discussing Britain's future in the European Union will be held in Dudley next week.

The event is being sponsored by the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group in the European Parliament backed by UKIP members. It will be held at the Brambles Hotel, in Priory Road, on Friday, November 20.

The meeting is part of a series of public meetings that will be taking place across the West Midlands.

Doors open at 7pm with the event starting at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £1, including booking fee and must be purchased in advance.

To purchase tickets for the evening and for further information about the meeting visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/saynotoeu

Carols and brass night at civic hall

ELLENVALE Singers of Gornal join Sovereign Brass from Smethwick for a festive concert. The music and carols night is at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on December 9 at 7.30pm, £7.50 adults and £3.50 children on the door.

Drug addict burglar is locked up again

A PROLIFIC burglar who was caught on CCTV raiding a house in Amblecote has been locked up for four years.

Lea Allen was filmed using a paving stone to smash a window to get into the home in Trinity Road.

The 38-year-old was still being recorded as he left the house 10 minutes later carrying £1,700 of goods including four laptops, an iPad and mobile phones.

Allen, of Conops Way, Lye, admitted burglary on July 1 this year.

He has a criminal record with 91 previous convictions, including many for thefts and burglaries.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court, Recorder Rashid Singh told Allen that he had not been taught

a lesson by a four-and-a-half year jail term he received in 2007 for breaking into homes in the Stourbridge area.

Mr Singh concluded: "This latest burglary is serious. You have not assisted in one jot to help recover that property."

"You used the crudest of methods to get into the property and the occupants suffered a significant financial loss."

Recognised

Miss Sally Cairns, prosecuting, said Allen was recognised when police officers saw the CCTV footage.

When officers went to arrest him he told them he had done it to clear a £1,500 drug debt.

James Hall, aged 31, was the victim of Allen's raid. He said: "I'm obviously pleased and happy to know he's not going to be doing this to anyone else."

"We only ever got the iPad back, but it's not about the goods that were stolen, justice has been served and I'm happy he's off the streets."

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, told the court it was accepted that Allen had an 'inglorious' criminal record.

But he said that Hall had managed to keep out of trouble for about three years.

Mr Hanns added: "Sadly he lapsed back into his drug addiction."

Bowls clubs shocked by potential massive fees

BOWLING clubs face a staggering rise of up to £12,000 in the fees they pay to Dudley Council, under plans.

The cash-strapped council, which needs to save £20 million by 2018, currently pays around £12,000 a year to maintain the greens at each of Dudley's eight bowling clubs. Clubs themselves pay only £750 towards those costs.

But council chiefs say they can no longer afford to subsidise the costs, which could leave clubs facing a massive bill.

Bosses said that if clubs decide to set up a trust then they can apply for external funding to help them out.

Dennis Joshua, from Dudley Sports Bowling Club in Kingswinford, said he was furious at the proposed move. The 79-year-old said: "We are elderly people who come here to socialise and have a go at bowling. Now its like we're being told we've got to find £12,000 a year or mow the green ourselves. It is absolutely disgusting. We currently pay £750 a year and now they are increasing it to this - it's an astronomical rise."

Struggle

Campaigner Abdul Qadus, of Lye, said the potential rise in costs at Wollescote Park in Stourbridge was 'disgraceful'. "Clubs are going to struggle to pay it and are going to face some seriously difficult situations," he said.

Councillor Hilary Bills, in charge of environmental services, said clubs need to face the 'truth' over the situation.

"Unfortunately the council will not have the money to support or help when it comes to activities like this," she said. "Officers are going around the bowling clubs and giving them the truth about how subsidised they are and the fact that this can't continue."

"We will continue to support the users of the greens. However, these are unprecedented times for all councils and we have to look at different ways of managing services in the face of continued reductions in funding from national government."

"We are trying to give them options, for instance either being a in a trust or asset transfer, as then they could go and get funding."

In relation to Dudley Sports Bowling Club, she added: "We are trying our best to come up with a method to help them, but if they want to keep their bowling green open they must come up with a way."

Helen's locks lopped to help others



Helen Rich with husband John and Pastors David and Denise Marsh at Black Country charity Centrepoint

A WOMAN has cut off her three foot long plait of hair to raise money for the homeless.

Helen Rich, aged 48 from Holly Hall, who suffers from depression and anxiety, last week took the brave step with proceeds going to Centrepoint Christian Community, in Carters Green, West Bromwich, to help the homeless.

Mrs Rich said: "I've seen all the hard work Centrepoint have done in helping the homeless people of

the area and I wanted to do something about it. My depression and anxiety has dragged me down for many years. It has at points left me feeling like I couldn't help myself let alone anyone else. Seeing the remarkable work done at Centrepoint, I felt like I had to do something to help."

She added: "After my hair was cut I felt very light headed but I'm not getting caught on things or stepping on my own hair now. I'm

very happy to have been able to make a difference. I was encouraged throughout by my support workers at Home Matters and Woodside Day Centre. I couldn't have done this without them."

Helen's hair is being donated to a local wig shop, and Centrepoint will use the money to help support the services they supply for asylum seekers, homeless, young and disadvantaged people, as well as their daily soup kitchen.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Public free to ask how our money is spent

PEOPLE who know me will tell you I am seldom lost for words. But even I am struggling to comprehend the thinking of our public servants when it comes the Freedom of Information Act.

Take, for example, Keith Ireland, the managing director of Wolverhampton Council. He says the questions people are asking under the Act are not what it was originally intended for, and come mainly from people looking to 'make trouble' for the council.

Sorry about that old boy. And I think I know the type of questions he means. Like "how much money do councils spend on consultants and agency staff when reducing library hours?" Or "How many times do they use anti-terror legislation to snoop on people suspected of not picking up dog poo?"

Of course the great and the good don't want us pesky troublemakers asking questions like that. Much better we stick to nice questions, such as "why are you so jolly good at everything?," and "can we have a few more parking restrictions, please?"

Problem is, these are not the burning questions on everybody's lips, and that's not quite how democracy works. The idea is the public asks whatever questions it wants to about how our money is spent, and the public servants duly oblige. It's why they are called public servants.

And here's a good question, which nobody seems to have asked yet.

"Why did it take an Act of Parliament to make councils answer simple questions from the people they are paid to serve?" No rush, an answer within 20 working days will be fine.

■■■■

NOW I'll square with you. When the World Health Organisation last week branded processed meats 'carcinogenic', and said fresh red meat 'probably caused cancer', I was worried.

I really wished I liked lettuce, salad, and the occasional oily fish, but the fact is I really can't bring myself to eat the stuff. To me, a meal is not a meal unless it has at least some beef, pork or lamb with it.

And I'm pretty partial to pork scratchings as well. Yet, according to the bof-fins, eating this sort of thing daily leads to an 18 per cent increase in the chances of getting cancer. Which makes my diet sound about as healthy as driving a Volkswagen.

I've since read that the risk is not quite as great as it sounds. A squeaky clean lettuce muncher typically has a six per cent chance of developing bowel cancer, while a red-blooded carnivore will probably have a seven per cent likelihood.

It probably is wise for us all to keep an eye on our meat consumption, and it surely is a good idea to discourage children from picking up bad habits. Even so, I don't think I will panic just yet.



Amjid Raza is spokesman for Dudley Muslim Association



Dudley Central Mosque is too small for the Muslim community



Dudley Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe welcomes the ruling

Council finally win mosque land dispute

Judges have decided that the proposed site for a new mosque must be handed back, **ANDREW TURTON** reports

DUDLEY Council has finally won its legal battle to stop plans for a new mosque in the town.

But Muslim leaders have vowed not to give up until they had exhausted every avenue in getting the mosque built.

After a decade-long controversy, Court of Appeal judges unanimously ruled in favour of the council over its bid to buy back land in Hall Street from Dudley Muslim Association (DMA).

Plans first emerged for the mosque to be built at the site back in 2003 as a replacement for Dudley Central Mosque in Castle Hill.

But the matter descended into a long-running dispute between the council and the DMA after a planning application was rejected in 2007.

This latest ruling, which comes after a two-day hearing held in London, states DMA must transfer the Hall Street land back to the council in January.

Reflection

But DMA has refused to rule out another legal bid to salvage its plans. Officials said they will take a 'period of calm reflection' before considering future legal options.

The Court of Appeal has ruled that DMA should also pay the council's legal costs, which have not yet been realised. But the authority confirmed last year it had spent £213,000 at that stage on legal fees.

Earlier this year, DMA offered an out-of-court settlement to pay the local authority £325,000 to finally end dispute and retain the land. But the council's cabinet rejected the offer in August after recommendations by the authority's overview and scrutiny management board following a two-day hearing.

Dudley Council leader, Councillor Pete Lowe, said the authority now wanted to work



An artist's impression of the mosque and community facilities intended for Dudley's Hall Street

again with DMA to find an alternative site for the mosque.

"We welcome the unanimous ruling which made it clear that the council has always acted lawfully and reasonably throughout this process," he said.

"Our open and transparent scrutiny process, supported by all political parties, was crucial in enabling the cabinet to make informed decisions.

"I hope we can now put this long-running issue behind us and move forward in the best interests of the town.

"We have set out very clearly our intention to support DMA in finding an alternative site. Our door remains open and we will continue to offer to work with DMA."

The legal hearings have centred on a contractual dispute dating back to 2005, when the council transferred the land at Hall Street to

the Muslim association. A clause in the contract stated that the land would transfer back to the council if the proposed development was not completed by the end of 2008.

Lawyers for the association had fought to stop the council seizing the land, where the old Nuttall's factory stands alongside Duncan Edwards Way.

But DMA suffered a blow last year when the High Court blocked an appeal against an earlier ruling.

In the latest hearing, lawyers claimed DMA was victim of an 'abuse of power' by the council over 'delays' to obtain planning permission before the deadline set by the council.

DMA spokesman Amjid Raza, said: "The Muslim community is naturally deeply disappointed with the judgement of the court in not allowing our case to proceed to full trial.

"All the judges who heard this case at vari-

ous levels expressed sympathy with the community's predicament.

"The community has made every effort to work with the council and other leaderships to construct a modern fit-for-purpose mosque and community facilities to meet the ever-growing and pressing religious, educational, caring and social needs of our disadvantaged community.

"The land at Hall Street was acquired from Dudley Council after a number of site-swaps at the council's request for above purposes."

Three far right protests have been held in the town this year, including by members of the English Defence League, in the wake of proposals for the mosque. Britain First and All Football Fans/Firms Against Islamisation also held demos in the town this year.

The marches brought disruption for traders with roads forced to shut and a huge police presence being brought into the town to keep the peace.

Since the plans first surfaced, more than 80,000 people have signed a petition against them.

Justice

Former UKIP and Liberal Democrat councillor Malcolm Davis, who helped organise the petitions, said: He said: "I think that justice has been done and I hope now this will be the end of it."

The Bishop of Dudley has called on the 'spirit of reconciliation' to prevail over the long-running saga on the future of the mosque, as he offered to broken new talks.

The Right Reverend Graham Usher said he hoped there can be a 'long-term solution'.

He said: "The Court of Appeal judgement will inevitably bring a variety of emotions to people in Dudley.

"It's important that we move forward from this decision in a spirit of reconciliation and shared endeavour for the good of all in our town.

"I am conscious that the existing Dudley Mosque is inadequate for the Muslim community's needs and they are in urgent need of new and improved facilities.

"I stand ready to help facilitate a conversation between Dudley Council and the Dudley Muslim Association to try to find a new vision that will fulfil the community's needs."

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

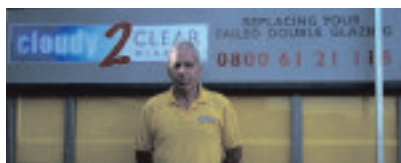
We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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Book's important message for women

I HAVE just read the book *My Own Story*, by Emmeline Pankhurst, which was the inspiration for the film *Suffragettes*.

This account should be read by every woman in order that they may know what women went through to get the vote.

It is a harrowing account of the struggle made by women of all classes against the chicanery and deceit of the government. The brutality meted out to these women, especially during forced feeding was horrifying and barbaric. all this by order of the government – men.

I am proud to be a member of Townswomen's Guilds which were started in 1929, when women at last got the vote!

It was realised that after being kept down and tied to the kitchen sink for so many years, some women needed to be taught what they could do to widen their horizons, that there is a life outside the home, without neglecting their wifely duties, and in so doing, they would be able to use their votes wisely and be more fulfilled.

Townswomen's Guilds is a non-political, non-sectarian, and non-racist organisation open to all women ir-

respective of race, creed, or political persuasion, which still campaigns for different things by putting forth reasoned arguments and suggestions.

Further and fuller information may be obtained from the Townswomen's Headquarters on Tyburn Road, Erdington, telephone 0121 326 0400. They would be only too pleased to furnish you with the details of what we stand for, past successes and details of guilds near you. Incidentally, we are nothing to do with the WI, Jam and Jerusalem!

MRS N T CROSSBEE
Smethwick

Why time off for good behaviour?

YET again we hear of someone who has committed a serious crime and has been given a considerable prison sentence by the judge — only to be released after serving a fraction of the time given.

Is this a reward for behaving well whilst in prison, because if they had behaved well on the outside then they would not be there in the first place.

Or is it some sort of unwritten rule that they don't have to complete the time the judge gave them anyway?

It is about time that offenders, instead of getting time off for good behaviour, did the full time and got ADDED time for bad behaviour.

The present system just makes a mockery of the sentence given by the judge and I am sure they must wonder why they bother.

J JAMES
Wordsley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chron@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Clearing up myths over fox hunting

AS the traditional fox hunting season gets under way, it's time to clear up a few myths about foxes and fox hunting.

It's been 10 years since hunting with dogs for sport was banned. It's a popular law among country dwellers and townsfolk alike, with eight out of 10 people keen for it to remain in place. It's also very successful, with the highest number and percentage of convictions of any wildlife animal welfare law in the UK and even better, has successfully reduced animal cruelty.

Yet still hunt supporters will cry foul play and claim fox hunting is necessary for wildlife management. But a world expert on foxes reveals that hunting is an unnecessary activity as foxes are not the pests that hunts like to claim.

A new report from Professor Stephen Harris from the University of Bristol shows that hunting does not reduce fox populations and killing foxes can in fact increase their numbers in a given area as more turn up to compete for the vacant territory. He also shows that fox predation does not have a significant impact on farmers. In fact, farmers can benefit because of the number of rabbits taken by foxes.

TOM QUINN
Campaigns Director
League Against Cruel Sports

Bag it or should be ashamed

WITH reference to the letter printed in The Chronicle on October 22, 2015: E Ward Davies, Stourbridge, you should be ashamed of yourself stating because you now have to pay for a carrier bag you will be leaving your dog's poo behind.

Your dogs and your responsibility to pick up after them.

If you can afford four dogs you can afford to go and buy a pack of bin bags to collect your dog's poo in.

Free carrier bags were issued by stores for the purpose of carrying the items you had purchased.

Yes, you could then recycle them whichever way you chose to.

I do, however, agree with you with regards to irresponsible people leaving dirty nappies around. You are now going to join that minority with regards to your intentions, by leaving your dog's poo behind.

Shame on you.
J E WILLETTS
Brierley Hill

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EofE rockers are kings of the castle



Dudley's rising stars EofE, from left, Dan Bremner, Reece Luke, Tom Harris, Luke Bradley and Nicky Waters

THEY have been performing to thousands of fans on tours with McBusted and The Vamps.

But Dudley boyband EofE are now hoping their debut album will take them to the top of the bill.

Following a 32-date sell out arena tour with supergroup McBusted in 2014, and a support slot with teen favourites The Vamps, EofE are now keen to conquer in their own right.

Tom Harris, Dan Bremner, Luke Bradley, Nicky Waters and more recent recruit Reece Luke say the album swiftly came together after touring, and that their sound has now matured.

Mixing rock and pop, the band have already drawn attention from rock music magazine Kerrang! and leading music app Spotify.

Reece, aged 22, said: "We know what our strengths are now and our sound has matured, there's no doubt about it."

"We've been a five piece for just under a year, and sometimes it takes members a lot of time to gel together to create music, but with us it just came together really quickly."

EofE, whose name is taken from the James Dean film East of Eden, first formed in 2012 after guitarist Dan and

bassist Luke attended Ellowes Hall School in Gornal.

The band, pictured during a visit to Dudley Castle in their home town, say that they are proud of their self-titled debut.

Singer Tom, aged 18, explained: "All we ever wanted to do was write and play, I don't think any of us set out to make money, yet now our hobby has turned into our career."

EofE can be followed on Facebook at [facebook.com/eofeofficial](https://www.facebook.com/eofeofficial)

They will be next playing locally at Stourbridge's River Rooms, in Mill Race Lane, on December 3.

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Victim of stabbing now fears permanent damage



Teenage victim Jason Head, from Essex, recovering with his girlfriend Naomi Palmer after he was stabbed in the arm

A TEENAGER stabbed in an unprovoked attack in Brierley Hill fears he has lost the feeling in his arm for good.

Nineteen-year-old Jason Head was with his girlfriend Naomi Palmer on October 31 evening when he was slashed with a knife, leaving a deep gash that needed 20 stitches.

Essex resident Mr Head was visiting Miss Palmer and the pair went out with three friends for a few drinks on Halloween around 9pm.

But they changed their minds after being on the subject aggravation outside the Bull's Head pub and headed

back towards Miss Palmer's home, when the attack occurred in Brettell Lane.

Mr Head said a group of thugs 'went for him three or four times' before slashing him with the knife.

Builder Mr Head said the attackers laughed at him after he was wounded.

"It's just unbelievable," he said. "A couple of guys started on me for no reason. I spoke to them, they grabbed me then pushed me so we left. Then as we were walking back home a group of guys came towards us and the next thing I knew I'd been stabbed and they ran off. Apparently I passed out but I don't remember."

Fortunately an ambulance was passing and Mr Head was taken to Russells Hall Hospital where he had the three inch wide and four inch long wound was stitched.

Days later Mr Head was still in pain does not know if the injury will have a lasting effect. "It feels like a constant bee sting on my arm," he said. "It's really sore and I can't move my arm. I might have lost the feeling in my arm for good."

Police said an 18-year-old local man was arrested and bailed pending further enquiries. Anyone with information should call 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

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Rubbish piled up around Duncan statue



Bad impression — rubbish surrounds the Duncan Edwards statue in Dudley town centre, before the council tidied

DUDLEY Council has been accused of 'shooting itself in the foot' after rubbish was left piling up next to the newly re-dedicated statue of Duncan Edwards.

The siting of a temporary recycling area for traders next to the statue has sparked criticism just weeks after hundreds of people gathered for a ceremony when the statue of the Manchester United legend, who died from injuries sustained in the Munich Air Disaster, was relocated to a more prominent position.

Scores of United fans attended the service on what would have been Ed-

wards' 79th birthday.

Jeff Smith, who works in Dudley and took the photo of the rubbish next to the statue, said: "I find it insensitive two or three weeks later for Dudley Council to locate their rubbish area right up against the statue."

"I appreciate it is probably a temporary measure and was done so they could easier load the rubbish onto one of their vans but it has been there for at least two weeks now. I can't believe there isn't a more appropriate alternative they could have used."

"I have worked in Dudley for the last three-and-a-half years and over

that time have seen the town centre develop into a much nicer place for shoppers so for this work the council should be commended, but from time to time they do seem shoot themselves in the foot."

Khurshid Ahmed, the council's cabinet member for planning and regeneration, said the rubbish had now been moved and the statue cleaned.

He said: "A purpose-built recycling store for traders' use has been built as part of the work on the market place."

"A temporary recycling storage area is currently in use while work is being completed on the permanent store and

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Teenage traders are in the market for success

A NEW market run solely by teenagers has been launched in Dudley town centre – with organisers hailing the first event a huge success.

Stallholders sold a variety of wares at the market held in Stone Street earlier this month.

Musicians were also given the opportunity to show what they could do, with lives music providing the backdrop during the event.

The 25-stall market was launched by Dudley Council in an attempt to give young people the opportunity to gain valuable experience and showcase their skills.

Ivy Garratt seized the chance to sell some unwanted items from home, including shoes and bags, with the day proving to be a huge success. The 19-year-old from Dudley is eyeing a future in customer services and said it was a great opportunity to improve her people skills.

She said: "My mum saw it on Facebook and asked me and my sister if we wanted to do it. We have both worked in retail but this is more about communication."

"We've had to go back home and get two more lots of stock because we sold it all. It's good practice for the real world. It's a really good opportunity for teenagers. Dudley teenagers seem to be viewed as the worst thing in the world but this shows we're not all bad and that we've got aspirations and dreams."

Friends Molly Shaw and Amy Norris took up a stall so they could raise cash for their African adventure next year. They each need to raise £2,000 to fund a conservation experience trip to the Kruger National Park, in South Africa, where they will learn about wildlife conservation.



Musician Shannon Wheatley, aged 17, of Upper Gornal, performed at The Teenage Market in Dudley

Oscar winner plans an Arena concert

HE'S the maestro behind iconic movie soundtracks including Gladiator and The Dark Knight.

And now Oscar-winning film composer, Hans Zimmer will be bringing his music to Birmingham in one of only two UK shows.

Zimmer's CV is a compendium of top Hollywood films with the German-born musician composing the soundtracks to blockbusters such as Inception, Interstellar, 12 Years a Slave, The Pirates of the Caribbean series, and The Dark Knight trilogy.

The Da Vinci Code, Mission Impossible, Guy Ritchie's Sherlock Holmes, Thelma And Louise, Crimson Tide, and Rain Man are also on his impressive list of 100 film scores.

During the tour, his 20-piece studio band, with whom he records his award-winning soundtracks, will be appearing alongside Lebo M, best known for his stunning vocals on Zimmer's Oscar-winning score for Disney's The Lion King.

There will be an orchestra and choir with over 70 musicians on stage at the Barclaycard Arena on April 12.

More than a quarter below the living wage

MORE than a quarter of workers in the Black Country and Staffordshire earn below the living wage, new figures show, with the figure rising close to 30 per cent in some areas.

The voluntary living wage, as promoted by the Living Wage Foundation campaign group, has increased by 40p per hour to £8.25 per hour.

More than 2,000 accredited employers have agreed to pay it, including Lloyds Banking Group, Barclays, Unilever and Richer Sounds. The figure is higher than the current national minimum wage of £6.70 per hour, and the Government's pending National Living Wage for those aged 25 and over of £7.20 per hour, from April.

Although the increase means a pay rise for staff working at employers signed up to the living wage, across the Black Country and Staffordshire 167,000 workers earn less than the old rate of £7.85 per hour.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that in South Staffordshire almost one in three jobs pay less than the rate.

Walsall has 25,000 employees earning less than the old rate (28.1 per cent) while in Dudley the same can be said of 28,000 staff (26.6 per cent). In Wolverhampton, a quarter of employees earn less than £7.85 per hour, representing 23,000 jobs. In Sandwell, 36,000 workers pick up less than £7.85 an hour, equating to 29.5 per cent per cent of the workforce.

Ravi Subramanian, Regional Secretary for Unison in the West Midlands, said:

By Peter Madeley

"There has been an increase in the number of employers who are paying the living wage and this has to be welcomed. It will make a significant difference to hundreds of people's lives."

"What we now need to see is more employers signing up to the voluntary living wage rather than paying the fake living wage that George Osborne has announced."

Injustice

Commenting on the increased rate of £8.25 per hour, Sarah Vero, director at the Living Wage Foundation said: "We are celebrating those 2,000 responsible businesses that are voluntarily paying the living wage to their staff."

"These employers are not waiting for Government to tell them what to do. Their actions are helping to end the injustice that is in-work poverty in the UK now."

As with the government's minimum wage, employers have six months to bring in the new pay level. The living wage is an informal benchmark, and is not a legally enforceable minimum.

Six Million Dollar Man at NEC event

TELEVISION'S Six Million Dollar Man will be visiting the MCM Comic Con event taking place at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre later this month.

Lee Majors, who played the bionically-enhanced Steve Austin, will be among the stars attending the event on November 21 and 22.

He will be meeting fans and signing autographs on both days of the NEC event.

The 75-year-old actor starred in the The Six Million Dollar Man series from 1973 to 1978 and then in The Fall Guy from 1981 to 1986.

The Six Million Dollar Man followed the adventures of Colonel Steve Austin, who gains superhuman strength, speed and vision after being 'rebuilt' with bionic implants following a 'plane crash.'

Comic Con Birmingham will also feature memorabilia from films and TV shows, comics, toys and clothing.



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Course to help older motorists

OLDER drivers in Dudley can put themselves on the road to success with a free safety course next month.

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has teamed up with Dudley Council and West Midlands Fire Service to deliver the driving safer for longer course. The course will run on December 5 at Haden Cross Community Fire Station, Cradley Heath, from 9.15am to 12.30pm.

It aims to boost safety for drivers aged 60 and over, offering to give drivers more confidence behind the wheel. The theory-based course will focus on safety and awareness skills and refresh drivers' knowledge of the Highway Code.

Places are limited to 30 and can be booked on (01384) 815433 or via road.safety@dudley.gov.uk

Council £6.5m agency staff bill leads to poor planning claim

CASH-STRAPPED Dudley Council spent £6.5 million on agency staff last year, it has been revealed.

It comes as the authority is proposing to shut the town's museum and art gallery and axe up to 275 jobs in order to save £20m.

Bosses insisted the appointment of temporary staff was necessary to ensure roles were not left vacant.

UKIP councillor Bill Etheridge said: "The fact that Dudley Council is spending millions

on temporary and agency staff, when it has announced plans to close the museum and art gallery, shows poor planning and recruitment policies on their part."

The authority has come under fire after revealing drastic cuts for the next three years which will see the museum and art gallery on Priory Street close and opening hours reduced at libraries and the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley.

UKIP councillor Paul Brothwood told the council's cabinet: "Most of the cuts seems to be to frontline services, which is surprising to see

when the council has spent nearly £7 million on agency staff. We should be focusing on cuts to agency staff as opposed to frontline services."

Expenditure on agency staff in 2014/15 fell slightly from £6.6m the previous year.

Deputy leader Judy Foster said: "There are a number of practical business reasons why Dudley Council employs agency and interim staff.

"Reasons include that key positions and statutory posts cannot remain vacant as they would put the authority in breach of its statutory responsibilities and deprive Dudley residents of the important services they need."

Ex-newspaper worker dies

A LOWER Gornal man who spent 35 years with the Express & Star in production has died at the age of 75.

Dudley-born Gordon Bray, of Brick Kiln Lane, joined the Dudley Herald straight from school and did his apprenticeship with the newspaper. He moved to the Express & Star in 1965 and worked in the composing room at the daily newspaper's Queen Street head office in Wolverhampton for most of his career.

He also worked at the company's regional centre in Narrowboat Way, Brierley Hill.

Mr Bray, who took early retirement in May 2000, died at Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley, on October 22. He is survived by his wife Pauline and their son Neil.

Footballer helps youngsters



Passing on skills — ex-international Nigel Quashie running a coaching session at Halesowen where young players included his own son Brayden Clarke, aged 8

FORMER Albion and Wolves player Nigel Quashie has returned to the Midlands after a spell in Iceland to set up a soccer school.

Nigel Quashie, who also played for Birmingham City in his 18-year career, has opened the Improving Players Development Academy.

The academy runs sessions for kids aged seven to 16 at Powerleague in Halesowen and Birmingham, and Goals in Wolverhampton.

Quashie, 37, spent four years in Iceland developing players after leaving Queens Park Rangers in 2010.

Now he hopes to use his coaching skills to take youngsters from the Black Country to the next level.

The combative midfielder, who was capped 14 times by Scotland, said: "With the academy what I want to do is see people enjoy playing football. It doesn't matter who they are or where they're from, the aim is to give them confidence by playing football and having fun. I think football should be for everybody and I want people to come here, get better and improve."

Call 0121 280 0585 or visit the www.ipda-quashie.co.uk website.

Support staff win praise for course

MORE than 30 kind-hearted support workers have been honoured at an event.

The workers helped scores of parents across Dudley as part of a series of nurturing programmes that started in April.

The family link workers' efforts in helping 160 parents understand their children's behaviour saw them praised at a ceremony in Stourbridge Children's Centre on Wednesday.

Parents who took part in the 10-week programme were taught how to interpret their child's behaviour and they were given positive strategies to move forward.

The event at the centre recognised the workers who delivered the programme.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services, said: "I'm glad this event took place to recognise the fantastic job support workers do helping families."

Care team greet intern

THE animal care team at Halesowen College have welcomed a new intern who will be looking after the animals and supporting practical lessons.

Thomas Grosvenor is from the HND Animal Management course and is on a one year contract. He will be helping to feed, clean and care for the range of animals at the college and will also provide technical support to practical lessons.

The team have just finished a new enclosure for a new pair of marmosets.

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The parade went through the town centre to Coronation Gardens



Standard bearers from uniformed services and veteran organisations at the cenotaph service



Veterans line up at the start of the remembrance parade from Top Church



We will remember them — veterans at the service in Dudley



Crosses left at Dudley Council House in memory of those lost their lives in conflicts

Crowds honour fallen

THOUSANDS gathered in Dudley to pay tribute to members of the armed forces killed in conflict.

Families from across the borough crowded into Coronation Gardens as civic dignitaries led the Remembrance Sunday proceedings.

These included a service at the cenotaph in Ednam Road and a parade featuring armed forces veterans. Music was provided by the Salvation Army band and Dudley College students.

There were poignant moments as hymns and the national anthem were sang with pride, the

Last Post was played and a two-minute silence observed.

Councillor Steve Waltho, Mayor of Dudley, said: "It is a great honour to be leading our community in marking the contribution and sacrifice made by our Armed Forces at this Remembrance Sunday parade and service."

"I am delighted that so many people came along to help thank those heroes who have served in the past and the men and women who currently in service at home and abroad today."

He added as many as 2,000 people had attended the event and there had been particularly large numbers of young people.

"Young people are key to these services," he explained.

"Each year we see more and more whether that be as members of the cadets or members of the public."

"It is so important they are educated and they remember the sacrifices made so they do not make the same mistakes as previous generations perhaps did."

Yesterday (Wednesday) veterans were joining councillors and members of the public at the Clock Tower, Priory Street, for the annual Armistice Day service to mark the end of the First World War.



Some of the many crosses of remembrance outside Dudley Council House

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Amateur theatre mourns stalwart

FORMER chairman of Oldbury Repertory Players, Doreen Bastable, has died aged 87 after an illness.

A member of the respected amateur company since 1942, Mrs Bastable from Halesowen served the group in several roles and was made chairman in 1977. She guided the company through many changes at its Spring Street base and its conversion into Barlow Playhouse, opened in 1956 by Sir Barry Jackson, founder of Birmingham Rep. Her late husband, Dan, was also a supporter of Oldbury Rep and was instrumental in the conversion of the Spring Street Methodist Chapel into a theatre.

Chairman Chris Smith said: "Doreen was a true inspiration to all of us over the years."

In 1969 she had been made a life member and had appeared on stage in 54 productions, and was still involved selling programmes for the July production of Hi-De-Hi.



The car left hanging in a tree after the accident in Cradley from which the driver had to be rescued

Driver has to be cut free from wrecked car in tree

A MAN had to be cut free after a car crashed and was left hanging in a tree in the Black Country.

Two other men also received facial and back injuries when the vehicle crashed into a metal fence outside a football training facility in Park Road, Cradley.

The driver, aged in his 30s, was trapped under in the wreckage and had to be cut free by West Midlands Fire Service.

The man complained of severe back pain and was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

Claire Brown, of West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesperson, said: "Emergency services arrived

to find a car had left the road, gone through a metal fence and came to rest in a tree on the other side of a wall.

"The two passengers, both men believed to be in their 20s to 30s, had got out of the car and had suffered relatively minor injuries.

"One had a facial injury which required some dressings on scene before both were taken to Russells Hall Hospital.

"The driver, a man in his 30s, was trapped in the wreckage."

The accident happened at around 12.40am on Saturday and it was attended by two fire crews, from Brierley Hill and from Haden Cross.

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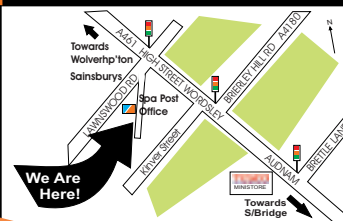


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Flooding warnings from new cameras

NEW flood warning cameras are being installed at flooding blackspots near homes across the Black Country.

Campaigners living in Halesowen were among those to suffer problems after Illey Brook flooded sending water into 46 homes.

A camera was installed to monitor the brook and now a wider scheme has been launched to alert residents to potential flooding through the Black Country.

By Andrew Turton

Now flood warning cameras have been installed in other sites including Kingswinford, Darlaston and Willenhall.

The camera system, which is solar powered, will monitor seven watercourses to help ensure people are alerted if their properties are at risk of flooding.

Gushed

People signed up to the Environment Agency's flood warning service will receive an automated call once water rises.

They can also follow the camera via Twitter to receive alerts and photos when the water levels rise significantly.

Water gushed into homes

in Honeybourne Road from Illey Brook in 2008 after the adjoining River Stour was overwhelmed by heavy rainfall.

Halesowen South Councillor David Vickers said he was delighted that the scheme provides reassurance to residents living near the brook.

"The cameras in place are incredibly useful as they will save a lot of time, effort and prevent people being obliged to check for floods, potentially on a daily basis," he said.

"I hope to see them implemented all over the country. They give you early warning and are a fantastic source of flood prevention."

Older mothers put units under pressure

RECORD numbers of births to older mothers are putting maternity units under pressure with the NHS short of around 2,600 midwives.

The number of babies born in England and Wales to women in their thirties and forties was up 6,859 in 2014. And that figure is on the rise in the West Midlands too, raising fears that hospitals that are already under pressure will struggle to cope.

In Sandwell the number rose by four per cent, compared to three per cent in Dudley and Wolverhampton, two per cent in Walsall and three per cent in Staffordshire.

Nationally, births to women in their early thirties (30-34) have been above 200,000 in each year since 2010 — a level not seen since at least the 1930s.

In every year since 2006, more than 110,000 babies have been born to women in their late thirties (35-39). This is a level of births not seen since just after the Second World War, and four times the level of the late 1970s.

College

For women in their 40s, births have been above 29,000 for four years in a row. These are again numbers not seen since the years after the Second World War.

With 661,496 babies born in England last year, almost 100,000 higher than in 2001, the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) said the NHS is short of around 2,600 midwives, made worse by the ageing of the midwifery workforce.

The number of midwives in England aged 50 or over has doubled from 4,057 in 2001 to 8,169 in 2014.

Last year is believed to be the first year on record when the NHS employed more than 1,000 midwives in their 60s.

The number aged 65 or over rose from just eight in 2001 to 177 last year, the RCM said.

Up to 100mph clocked on the Birmingham New Road

Couple celebrate 65 years with love song



Still in tune — music-loving Black Country couple Jack and Mary Hingley met in 1948 and married two years later JACK and Mary Hingley have been together since 1948 after meeting at the Royal Cinema in Cradley Heath as teenagers.

Mr Hingley, 84, was serving at RAF Manby, in Lincolnshire, and had to book a weekend off to get married on October 28, 1950 at Dudley Registry Office.

Mrs Hingley, 83 from Cradley Heath, was a sewing machinist and her husband worked as a foundryman at John Barnsley and Sons in Netherton on leaving the RAF. He was made redundant at 59 but went on to work alongside his wife at Laney Electronics in Cradley Heath until they retired.

They have two daughters, Jacqueline, aged 64 and Susan, aged 61, three grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Mr Hingley, who went to Northfield Road School in Netherton, said: "It is an amazing achievement to get a second congratulatory card from the Queen after our 60th. I still love Mary and adore as much as I did when we first met in 1948.

Mrs Hingley added: "Jack used to serenade me with a rendition of Strangers in the Night, I loved it. He was a fantastic singer, he still is."

Dynamo pledge to stun fans at live arena show

TV MAGICIAN Dynamo is bringing his Seeing Is Believing show to Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena for five consecutive nights next month.

The hip street magician, whose stunts have included walking on water on the River Thames and levitating above London skyscraper The Shard, opened his tour in Manchester last month after announcing his last series of Dynamo: Magician Impossible for TV channel Watch.

Dynamo, real name Steven Frayne, hit screens just three years ago with his first series of Magician Impossible and has quickly established himself as one of the

world's best known magicians, with his series airing in over 180 countries reaching over 250 million viewers. He was recently awarded the highest accolade by the Magic Circle with promotion to Member of the Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star.

Dynamo says: "I was ready for a new challenge and for a long time I have wanted to take my show to the stage. I am hoping that like I did for magic on TV, I can reinvent the live magic show and produce something fans have never seen before."

Dynamo will be in Birmingham from December 9 to 13. Tickets start from £37.25. Call 0844 338 8000.

IT is one of the most notorious stretches in the Black Country, a road that has seen many accidents and tragedies.

In many cases speed may have played a part

Following a Freedom of Information request, we can reveal that over the past three years, reckless speeders have hit 97mph, 80mph and 79mph on the 40mph road.

The top speed recorded was 100mph, which a driver hit between the A463 junction at Coseley and Vicarage Road West, Tipton, last year.

Birmingham New Road stretches from the edge of Wolverhampton city centre to near the Birchley Island in Oldbury where it becomes the Wolverhampton Road.

The new figures have been revealed at a time when campaigners are calling for new traffic lights at the junction leading to Woodcroft Avenue on the border of Tipton and Dudley. Some 600 people have

Report by Richard Guttridge

signed a petition in support of the safety measures.

Councillor Ken Finch, who represents the Castle and Priory ward in Dudley, believes working speed cameras need to be brought back to the road to make drivers slow down. He also wants more police checks.

Accident

"There have been concerns over that road for years and until someone comes up with something better, speed cameras have to be in place because they do make people think," he said.

"I would also like to see more police checks rather than just random checks. There are a lot of naughty people about now, going above the speed limit and using their mobile phones and this just increases the chance of an accident.

"Anyone doing that sort of speed de-

serves to have their licence taken off them and sent down. If they have an accident it is often not the one breaking the law who is hurt, that end up in hospital or worse."

In 2013, a driver was also recorded travelling at 97mph, again between the A463 Vicarage Road West. Another motorist was seen doing 80mph between the Burnt Tree junction and Tipton Road, while a year later a car was clocked travelling at 79mph at the same location.

The fastest speed recorded this year up to the end of September was 74mph, again between the Burnt Tree junction and Tipton Road.

AA spokesman Luke Bosdet said working speed cameras may be the only way to make drivers slow down. He said: "With that sort of road they may have to resort to speed cameras. They may annoy many people who regard themselves as law-abiding and make an occasional mistake but where there is such an obvious danger people must understand there is a reason to take more drastic measures."

Charities get £100k cash boost

THREE charities in the Black Country are among 1,000 around the UK to benefit from Yorkshire Building Society members' small change.

The society's charitable foundation has donated a total of £100,000 to charities and good causes nominated by people during its Small Change Big Difference campaign.

Mary Stevens Hospice, Alzheimer's Society and Midland Air Ambulance were among those to be given a £100 donation after being nominated at the Halesowen branch of Yorkshire Building Society.

The foundation is funded through the scheme where members donate the pennies from the annual interest on their accounts to help charities and good causes.

Lorna Kendrick, manager of the Halesowen branch of the building society, said: "I hope these donations will enable the charities to carry on their wonderful work."

For information on how to sign up and make a difference to your local community, visit www.ybs.co.uk

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A picture of the 1772 canal bridge, seen from the new bridge, as it was 110 years ago



Joey Brew holding the jigsaw below the bridge it depicts



Barry Freeman's painting End of an Era, featuring the Defiant locomotive



The 'Meccano' bridge under construction 100 years ago



The coal yard at Newbridge, by the old canal bridge

Centre puts pieces together to bridge gap from end of an era

IN the summer of 1947, the Great Western Railway Castle Class locomotive Defiant hauled a passenger train from Tettenhall Station, crossing the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal on the Warren Truss girder bridge.

Always known locally as the Meccano Bridge, it was only 400 yards beyond the station, with private, working narrowboats hauling loads on the waterway beneath.

This really was heading towards the end of an era, because on January 1, 1948 the railways and the waterways were nationalised.

It was the end of an era in another sense, as the very last flights of any Defiant aircraft, after which the locomotive was named, were made at this time from Penfold airfield, only half a mile away, where Boulton Paul still used one of two for development work.

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

The Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre – based near the canal at the Smestow Valley local nature reserve – discovered that a marvellous painting depicting the historic scene, painted by local artist, Barry Freeman had been made into a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle.

Immediately they secured a stock for sale in their shop, ready for Christmas, and to publicise it's existence to locals who know the Meccano bridge so well. The Meccano Bridge now carries the Smestow Valley foot/cycle path across the canal.

It was built a hundred years ago to carry what was built as the Wolverhampton to Bridgnorth Railway, though the branch from Wombourne to Bridgnorth was never actually completed.

The next bridge over the canal to the East was built, along with the canal, in 1772, to

carry the London to Holyhead Road, and alongside that, as at most canal/road junctions in the town, there was a coal yard, on the site of the current MS Centre.

Right next to the 1772 bridge is the New Bridge, carrying Thomas Telford's road below The Rock.

However the bridge carrying the road now, is not Telford's bridge, which gave the area its name, because that was knocked down in 1930, along with the Newbridge pub which was built on the end of it, and was replaced with the bridge we have today, a new Newbridge pub being built over the road.

A little nearer the Rock yet another bridge carries the Tettenhall road over the old railway line as well, and yet such is the design of the main road, many people driving along it each day would struggle to realise what a cluster of bridges there are.

The Heritage Centre, at Tettenhall Station is open every Sunday, and makes a perfect place to explore these local history gems.



Alec Brew seen inside the centre

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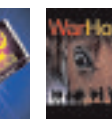
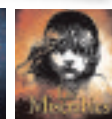
For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the show to see an evening performance.

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MP backs shop staff protection

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has thrown his backing behind a campaign to protect shop workers from abuse.

Mr Austin has added his support to union Usdaw's efforts to get more respect for store staff as part of the Freedom From Fear Campaign. This aims to prevent violence, threats and abuse directed at retail staff.

The union has campaigned for the introduction of a specific offence relating to assault on people whose work brings them into face-to-face contact with the public.

Labour MP Mr Austin said: "Too often retail employees are confronted with violence, threats and abuse and it is really important we stand together and ask people to respect shop workers. I will continue to campaign with Usdaw to provide shop workers the support they need and deserve."

Black Country sporting heroes honoured at glitzy prize night

IT was the night that local sporting heroes went from grassroots to glamour as achievements were honoured at the annual Black Country Sport and Physical Activity Awards.

The inspirational ceremony, organised by the Black Country BeActive, saw athletes, coaches and volunteers at Wolverhampton's Ramada Park Hall Hotel to celebrate in style.

Halesowen's wheelchair tennis Paralympic champion, Jordanne Whiley, scored in two of the categories, picking up Disabled Sportserson

of the Year and Sportserson of the Year. Her mother Julie received the awards on her behalf whilst she competes in California.

A video message was played out from Jordanne, who was awarded an MBE last month after winning two grand slam doubles titles in the summer and her first grand slam single title in the US Open just weeks before.

"I just wanted to say thanks so much for both of the awards," she said on a big screen.

It was a double celebration for Jordanne who also scooped the Sky Disability Sportswoman of the Year prize at a separate awards evening.

One of Britain's greatest cyclists, Hugh Porter MBE, was present to receive the Elvis Gordon Chair's Recognition Award for his outstanding contribution to both sport and the Black Country.

Six-time gold medal winning Paralympic athlete, David Weir, was guest speaker for the evening.

Winners in other categories included Corey Clarke for Newcomer of the Year, Richard Newell for Community Coach of the Year and Darlaston FC's Gilbert Preece, aged 72, for Unsung Hero.

Groups all set for base move

COMMUNITY groups are preparing to move into a new base in Dudley town centre following the major refurbishment of a disused building.

The former Age UK centre in Stafford Street has been renamed DY1 and will now be home to Dudley Council for Voluntary Service. A number of voluntary groups will be based at the building, near the town's magistrates' court.

Its main hall will be used to host business conferences and public meetings, while it is also hoped DY1 will become a venue for weddings and other functions.

The building, which was empty for three years, will be officially opened by Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho tomorrow (Fri).

Florence enjoys her big day



Celebrating her 100th birthday, Florence Evans, at Himley Country Hotel, near Dudley

AN AFTERNOON of fine dining was in store for one Black Country woman celebrating her 100th birthday.

Florence Evans, from Princes End, Tipton, was treated to a three-course meal with friends and family to celebrate the momentous occasion at the Himley Country Hotel in Dudley.

Mrs Evans was born in Wallbrook, Coseley, and attended Christ Church School. After leaving school she worked at Clifford Williams' sewing factory in Tipton.

She married her husband, Harry, who was a baker, when she was 19 and they had one son together, Arthur, now aged 79.

Arthur now lives in France with his wife Janet, who organised the birthday celebration alongside Mrs Evans great-nieces, Sara Pulley and Tracey Franks.

Mrs Pulley, aged 48, from Bilston, ex-

plained how her great-aunt played a vital part in her childhood.

She said: "She was wonderful to me and my sister, as from the time I was born she always looked after me.

"She was a very traditional lady, and always enjoyed sewing after she came home from work too.

"We decided to organise a party at the Himley Country Hotel, and have a three-course meal too. It was a great day."

Mrs Pulley added that following the afternoon Mrs Evans wished she could do the day all over again.

"Florence said to me 'I wish we could do it all again' because it was such a lovely afternoon.

"More than 40 people attended, including Arthur and Janet who especially came from France," she added.

Foreign residents double in a decade

THE number of foreign people living in parts of the Black Country has almost doubled in the last 10 years.

In 2004 some 94.02 per cent of residents in the Black Country and Staffordshire were UK-born but that figure dropped to 89.18 per cent in 2014. Of the 1.58 million people living in the region in 2014, 168,000 were not originally from the UK.

Sandwell had the highest percentage of foreign residents with 19.75 per cent, or 61,000 – up by 6.54 per cent, or 18,000, on 2004. And 45,000 were not from the EU. In Wolverhampton, 81.6 per cent of residents who were born in the UK was down from 82.77 per cent the year before and 88.04 in 2004. In Dudley the number fell from 97.02 per cent in 2004 to 95.19 per cent, while in Walsall it went from 93.63 to 89.38. In the West Midlands, the biggest number of non-UK born residents came from India, with 102,000, then Pakistan with 82,000 and Poland third with 75,000.

Scheme for new homes

EIGHT homes will be built along a main road in Dudley, under plans lodged with Dudley Council..

KP Properties has submitted plans to build the homes along Stourbridge Road, near the Scotts Green Island.

Parking would be provided to the side of the semi-detached properties, should they be given the go-ahead.

Dudley Council is expected to make a decision on the plans sometime over the next few weeks.

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Concert hall full for Poppy concert

A CONCERT honouring those who gave their lives in conflicts struck the right note with music lovers packing out Dudley Town Hall for the charity event.

The Gentleman Songsters Male Voice Choir staged its annual Festival of Remembrance concert in Dudley to raise funds for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Concert-goers packed into the town hall, in St James's Road, for the event which also featured Sovereign Brass, Bridgnorth Ukulele Band and compere Marlene.

A highlight was the traditional poppy drop, where petals are dropped from the ceiling commemorating those from the town who have died fighting for their country.

Chairman of the Gentlemen Songsters Keith Moss said: "It was a wonderful event and the turn-out was excellent. It allowed people to pay their respects to those who gave their lives in conflicts while enjoying an evening of music at the same time."



Chris Hales and Rachael Rothero congratulated by children Lauren, Alexis, Scarlet and cousin Summer

25,000 see Chris pop the question at fireworks show

SHE was meant to be going to the darts but instead Rachael Rothero got a marriage proposal at Dudley's big fireworks display at Himley Park in front of 25,000 people.

Boyfriend Chris Laws popped the question on the Heart FM stage on Saturday night as delighted spectators held up mobile phone torches to create some mood magic.

Rachael, 34, was lured on to the stage with a story that the couple's children had won prizes. But Chris, a 35-year-old sales account manager, got down on one knee and happily Rachael accepted.

Afterwards she said: "I had no idea until the last minute what was going on. I was in absolute shock, my legs turned to jelly. It was the perfect place for it to happen."

Chris was contacted by the radio station last week after he liked a Facebook page they had set up looking for a likely Romeo – or Juliet – to propose to their other half.

The couple, who have three children between them – Lauren, aged 11, eight-year-old Alexis, and Scarlett, three – have been going out for two years.

The couple had meant to be going to the Grand Slam of Darts at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall on Saturday but Chris managed to convince Rachael to change their plans.

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Row over goggles ban for school swimmers

A PRIMARY school has banned pupils from wearing goggles in swimming lessons because it says they don't prepare youngsters for 'emergency water situations'.

Christ Church School in Coseley refuses to allow youngsters to wear goggles unless they are worn for medical reasons.

The move has been slammed as 'ridiculous' by parents and branded 'a load of b*****' by a councillor.

Parents who want their children to wear goggles have to produce a doctor's note. The school has defended its policy, claiming it is following national guidelines.

The school runs lessons for pupils at Tipton Leisure Centre.

Lisa Fellows said she has stopped her eight-year-old son Klay from participating in lessons as a result of the ruling.

"If he doesn't wear goggles his eyes become red and start to water," said Mrs Fellows, aged 42, from Coseley.

"He loves swimming and it has broken his heart that the school won't let him in the pool if he wears them. The excuse they are giving is ridiculous. It's as if they are saying children can't swim properly if they have got goggles on."

Swimmer Klay Fellows



Tipton Leisure Centre chief duty manager Ian Thomas said the centre had no policy in place preventing pupils from wearing goggles in its pool.

"We have several schools that use our centre that allow goggles," he added.

Sarah Riley, headteacher at the Outstanding-rated school in Church Road, said: "Swimming is a big part of our curriculum and a life skill we take very seriously."

"National guidelines discourage children from wearing goggles to prepare them for emergency water situations, something we support in school."

"But we have no intention of banning any child from wearing goggles if there is a reason to wear them, and we do have some children who wear goggles in swimming lessons."

"A recent letter to parents said very clearly that any parents who wanted to discuss this matter should come and see me. My door is always open to parents on any school issues to make sure they have the right information."

Olympic

Councillor Star Anderson, who represents Coseley East for UKIP, said: "If goggles are good enough for our Olympic swimmers then why should our children not be allowed to wear them?"

"I can't for the life of me think why the school would make this decision. They are supposed to be teaching children how to swim not pushing them away by bringing in nonsensical rules."

"It's a load of b*****. Parents will understandably be furious."

Dudley Council spokesman Chris Howes said the authority allowed individual schools to make decisions over eyewear during swimming lessons.

Lights action at village

PEOPLE living in Wall Heath are gearing up for their big Christmas lights switch-on later this month.

There will be plenty of entertainment in the village on November 29, including a mini funfair, Santa's grotto and snow machine, in High Street. The Kingswinford Male Voice Choir will also be performing at the event organised by Wall Heath Village People. The switch on is at 4pm.

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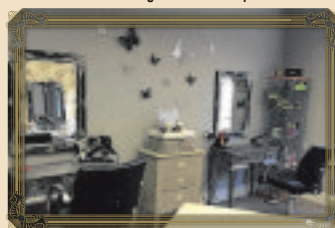
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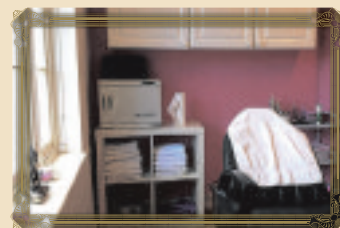
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Indulgent gift with an historic setting

AN 18th Century country house has launched an on-line gift voucher ordering service for their indulgent afternoon teas in time for the festive season.

The vouchers enable people to book a special sitting at the historic

hall where royal newlyweds spent their honeymoon and princes and earls once strolled.

Guest arrive at Himley Hall for 2pm and are seated in one of the beautifully refurbished ground floor rooms.

The menu includes a selection of ribbon sandwiches and indulgent cakes. The 2016 season of afternoon tea dates offers an optional glass of

bubbly or cocktail. To buy vouchers, visit www.dudley.gov.uk and search for 'afternoon tea.' Or call Himley Hall on 01384 817817 for more information.

Individual, small party or large group bookings are also available up to a maximum of 100 people.

Himley Hall is a Grade II* listed building set within 180 acres of grounds designed by Capability Brown.

Reach out over the festive break

PEOPLE are being urged to volunteer more as the Christmas period approaches.

Dudley Council's housing service's befriending scheme, Stay Connected, is on the look-out for volunteers who would like to help vulnerable people living in the borough.

The aim of the scheme is to provide one-to-one and group assistance to housing tenants who are lonely, isolated or facing a difficult time.

Over the Christmas and New Year period this can be particularly true as those living alone, suffering from ill health, or who feel like they are on the fringes of society, can feel the loneliness of the 'festive' season.

The scheme helps individuals to gain a more positive outlook by becoming more involved in society – for instance they may start to attend a new group, gain a new interest or hobby or make new friends.

Volunteers provide friendly, informal support by forming partnerships with the users. Whenever possible, a 'befriender' is matched with someone with the same interests.

So, if you have any spare time you could dedicate to this project why not get in touch. It is very rewarding and can expand your own social group.

Anyone interested in volunteering for this service should call 07827 873394 or email stayconnected@dudley.gov.uk.

Befrienders should be at least 18 years of age and checks will be conducted before recruitment. Full training will also be provided. Volunteers do not need to be council tenants to participate.



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Festive fun for Danny Harris, of Stourbridge with daughter Isabelle Harris



Kascion Franklin from 'Danny and the Human Zoo' will switch on the lights this year



The Merry Hill Centre Christmas Lights switch on in 2014 was a great success

Dazzling lights to be unveiled

ACTOR Kascion Franklin, who starred in Lenny Henry's hit BBC show Danny and the Human Zoo, will switch on Dudley's Christmas lights next month.

The Wednesbury actor will help to launch the brand new lighting system which has been installed in the town centre as part of the multi-million pound market place redevelopment.

The event takes place on Saturday, November 14 at 5pm preceded by five hours of fun in Stone Street Square and Church-ill Shopping Centre. There will be free fun-fair rides and live cookery demonstrations, street entertainers, vintage organ music as well as an appearance by Father Christmas.

Lights have been set into buildings around the market place and landmarks such as the Duncan Edward and Ben Boucher monuments.

The system will be able to light up buildings in different colours so that events such as St George's Day or Breast Cancer Awareness Week can be commemorated.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and regeneration, said: "The new lighting system in Dudley will be a feature aspect of the market place regeneration, helping to provide the setting for a vibrant shopping area."

"It will enable us to project different images on various themes, such as Christmas, onto the central entertainment area to create an atmospheric light show."

Dudley's Mayor, Councillor Steve Waltho and Mayoress Jayne Waltho, will also be attending for the official switch-on.

The £6.7 million regeneration of Dudley town centre includes a newly designed market, new paving, the restoration of many historic features and buildings as well as the feature lighting.

This work has been funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Dudley Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund and is due to complete later this year.

There are also Christmas lights events in Halesowen, Brierley Hill and Stourbridge.

● In Halesowen, the lights will be switched on by Dudley's Deputy Mayor Councillor Mohammed Hanif at 5pm on Saturday, November 21.

Between 11am and 5pm in the town centre, there will be a funfair, live music and performers, a Christmas market, visit from the Big Red Robot and Father Christmas.

The event is in conjunction with Dudley Council, Halesowen Chamber of Trade and the Cornbow Shopping Centre.

● Brierley Hill's Christmas lights switch-on takes place on Saturday, November 28 by the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Steve Waltho at 5pm.

From noon to 5pm there will be funfair

rides, entertainment and Father Christmas.

Events take place at Moor Shopping Centre, Asda, the Indoor Market and Polly's Tea Room.

● Stourbridge will be hosting their event on Saturday, December 5 from 11am to 5pm in High Street, Market Street, Coventry Street, Duke Street, Crown Square and the Ryemarket.

The town's Christmas market runs from 9am to 5pm and there will be a funfair, entertainment, steam engines, a miniature steam train and Father Christmas.

The Mayor of Dudley will switch on the lights at 5pm.

The Stourbridge event is organised by Dudley Council in conjunction with Stourbridge Chamber of Trade and the Ryemarket Shopping Centre.

Anyone who is interested in sponsoring one of the Christmas trees in the borough can contact 01384 815228.

Festive financial help is available

Castle & Crystal Credit Union is now offering local people loans of up to £1,500 to help with the cost of Christmas.

The credit union has increased the amount that people can apply for at Christmas to help steer them away from loan sharks and doorstep lenders in the run up to the Christmas period.

Christmas loans of £250 - £1,500 are available and can be repaid on a weekly, fortnightly, four weekly or monthly basis to suit people and must be repaid within a maximum of 11 months.

Castle & Crystal has already helped hundreds of residents to avoid expensive loans with payday lenders. Examples include offering a local nurse £1,000 to pay for extra training and helping a local mum with £1,700 to purchase a car to get her disabled son to school.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing said: "Credit unions offer affordable loans as an alternative to payday lenders that can charge interest rates of up to 4,000 per cent and can lead to their customers being in more debt than they were before taking out the loan."

"I would encourage local people to opt for their local Dudley borough credit union this Christmas period, rather than choosing loan sharks and doorstep lenders."

To find out more on Castle & Crystal Credit Union, including more information on how to apply for a savings account or a loan please go online and visit the website at www.castleandcrystal.co.uk or call 01384 814771.



Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member of Health and Wellbeing pictured with Sophie Byatt, business and marketing assistant of Castle & Crystal credit

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Rays Farm
A message from **Father Christmas**

Hello Children All!
Just a reminder that I will be living and working at Rays Farm, Billingsley, Bridgnorth from the end of November.

In order that we can have a little chat together please book your visit well in advance by telephoning
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Signed
Father Christmas

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Terrific toys are us at Christmas

FROM film franchises to classic favourites, there is something for every taste here.

With Star Wars Episode 7: The Force Awakens in cinemas soon, there is a galaxy of toys for all ages available.

The Sphero Star Wars BB-8 App-Enabled Droid (RRP £129.99) is a technological marvel, allowing its owner the chance to operate a real tiny robot using a tablet or mobile phone.

It's not cheap but is sure to be at the top of many a list this year.

For Star Wars fans wanting to fork out a lot less money though, the cuddly Chewbacca toy from Build-a-Bear Workshop is just the job.

Is galactic rule your thing? Monopoly: Star Wars Edition is ideal for the Sith in you.

Lego is a mainstay at Christmas. Elsa's Sparkling Ice Castle from Disney's Frozen will be hit no doubt. Fancy yourself as a crackshot? Nerf N-Strike Modulus ECS-10 Blaster is a safe way to prove you have what it takes.

Consoles and the games for them will be popular again this year. Buy your copy of Fifa 2016 now, available on many platforms. Zoom along on the Razor E100 Electric Scooter. Available in various colours, it won't be long before these become common sight.

Children – and adults – can't get enough of the Minions. Tumbling Stuart will raise a smile or two when the turkey has long gone.

For younger children, Tomy's Jumbo Jamboree and Play All Day Elmo will become firm favourites.



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80-multi-function LED Christmas tree lights, £9.99 – Argos



Decorations add to celebrations

IT'S time to make our homes sparkle and glow with a multitude of decorations.

Whether you are looking to decorate your home for Christmas or further ahead, there are plenty of fun ideas hitting the shelves at stores throughout the region.

Here is a small selection to give your rooms the wow factor.



Set of four Silver Ridged Glamour Napkin Rings, £5.40 – Debenhams



Christmas gift boxes (case of 48), £23.76 – Home Bargains

Historic fountain is back in action



Dudley fountain in all its glory in 1867

The 150-year-old fountain in Dudley's town centre market place has been switched on again this month just in time for Christmas after being out of action for decades. The centrepiece sculpture has been lovingly restored and brought back to its former glory as part of the £6.7 million market place regeneration.

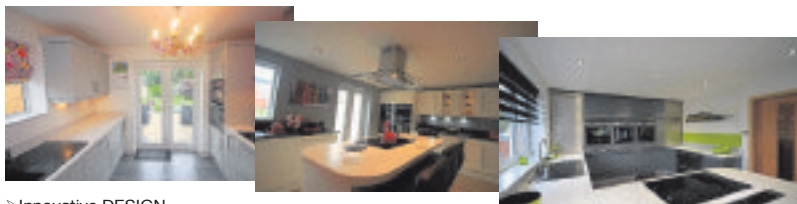
To enhance the 19th century monument, a poem written by Black Country poet John Edgar has been inlaid into the ground around the fountain, which also features special lighting.

Originally a trio of three, the now keeper Mrs Iris Reed give talks to local groups and schools about the importance of preserving the area's past.

This work has been funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Dudley Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund and is due to complete later this year.

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Free parking – and hopefully not as snowy as this – will be made available

Shoppers to enjoy free parking days

Shoppers will receive a pre-Christmas boost in Dudley borough.

The council has confirmed that it will offer free parking throughout the day on Saturday, December 5, 12 and 19 in all of its car parks.

It's hoped the decision will boost trade in Brierley Hill, Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge as well as smaller centres such as Sedgley and Kingswinford.

It is also hoped it will give a boost to the national Small Business Saturday, also on December 5, which celebrates local businesses and encourages people to shop in their home towns and villages.

Free parking will also be offered after 4pm on Saturday, November 14, 21, 28

and December 5 to coincide with the annual Christmas lights switch-on events in Dudley, Halesowen, Brierley Hill and Stourbridge.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The council has traditionally provided free parking in the run-up to Christmas for the benefit of our traders and shoppers."

"I would like to encourage all our residents to make the most of free parking and also join in with Small Business Saturday by doing their seasonal shopping within the borough."

For more information on parking in Dudley visit www.dudley.gov.uk/parking or call 0300 555 2345.

Spirit of success at teenage market

HUNDREDS of people started their Christmas shopping early at Dudley's first teenage market.

Hundreds of people visited Stone Street, in the town centre, to enjoy the novel event. Teenagers aged 14-19 sold their own goods on 27 free market stalls that were provided by Dudley Council.

Items for sale ranged from home-made cakes and jams, to arts and crafts, clothes, jewellery, Christmas decorations and even book folding.

Talented teenagers also provided the on-stage entertainment throughout the day, with bands and singers representing most musical genres, from folk and indie, to rock and metal.

The event was organised by Dudley Council as part of its Love Your Community campaign and it was sponsored by the Dudley Ambassadors team.

Business

Further free entertainment, in the form of a climbing wall was provided by Dudley Army Cadet Force and Spider Mountain was provided for the adventurous at heart and a head for heights.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The event was even more successful than we imagined."

"We set up the day to allow teenagers to learn about business and to give them an opportunity to shine."

"Our market stalls were over-subscribed, which shows us that there is a wealth of enterprising young people."

"I hope that the teenagers who took part gained enough know-how and confidence to keep building their businesses and maybe even take a regular stall in Dudley's market."



The teenage market was a big success

"The traders and performers did us proud and showed to everyone how talented and driven young people can be."

Dudley College student Molly Shaw, 19, sold home-made crafts on a teenage market stall.

She said: "This is the first time that I've sold my own goods and it was a fantastic day. My Christmas decorations, in particular, sold really well."

"It was a lot of fun getting ready for this event not knowing what the public would like to buy."

"I have learnt a lot from this experience and it would be great to do it all over again."



Teenagers sold their own goods

"Most importantly, the event has helped me to raise money towards my African Conservation Experience trip next year to the Kruger National Park, in South Africa, where I will learn about wildlife conservation."

Staff at Dudley Council are hoping to run the teenage market again next spring.

The market complemented Dudley's existing market project, which has benefited from more than £6 million investment funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Dudley Council.

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The Winter Warmth Support Service is helping pensioners save on their fuel bills

Keep warm for less this winter

WITH the summer just a memory, the Winter Warmth Support Service is gearing up to support borough residents to have warmer homes and lower fuel bills.

The service offers home visits to residents of all ages with all types of homes; to advise on keeping warm, accessing energy discounts and cheaper tariffs, also helping to

set heating controls and distributing blankets and hot water bottles.

Homeowners in their 80s, Coseley couple Harold and Brenda Loach, were with separate suppliers for their gas and electricity and on standard variable tariffs. By switching supplier, they were helped to save £170 and also claim the £140 Warm Homes Discount.

"The service has been a great help," said Harold. "We have noticed a huge difference in the monthly bills and the

savings we have found are marvellous.

The service brought us a blanket and hot water bottle, which are beautiful and keep us cosy! We use them on the chair and our bed. "To be warm is vital with the health conditions that I have."

The service's home visitors are fully vetted and on arrival will present their photo-card identification badges. For more information, contact the Winter Warmth Support Service on 01384 817 086 or email WinterWarmth@dudley.gov.uk

Poetic tribute unveiled

A tribute to Dudley poet Ben Boucher, unveiled today as part of the town centre regeneration, could end up becoming a 'selfie' attraction.

Two stone seats have now been installed at the end of the new market place next to the fountain – one of which features a life-sized statue of the poet.

Boucher has been cast in bronze sitting and pointing to verses from his humorous poem, "Lines on Dudley Market" which have been inscribed into the seats.

Fights

A coal miner by trade, he frequented the pubs of Dudley reciting and selling his poetry which covered topics from hangings to animal fights. He died when he was 82, a ripe age for someone of that era, but sadly, it was whilst living in a workhouse.

Borough artist Steve Field designed the tribute using Black Country resident David Purser wearing Victorian clothes for his drawings and the initial 3D clay model.

The seats and statue are part of the £6.7 million regeneration of the town centre, funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Dudley Council.

One of the Boucher seats incorporates a bronze cast statue of the poet who lived from 1769 to 1851. The statue has been produced by sculptor John McKenna whose previous work includes the Wimbledon tennis champion Dorothy Round Little statue in Priory Park. The seats are in front of the fountain, which is currently undergoing restoration. They are made of the same



Selfie attraction? Boucher's new bronze statue with Mayor, Councillor Steve Waltho and Mayoress Jayne Waltho

Portland Stone. Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "This tribute to one of our colourful characters will be a feature of the town centre and I'm sure will attract people to take photographs next to the seated statue."

"Having the wording inscribed into the seats means that shoppers can read about the different sorts of items

sold in the market in 1827, such as porridge pots, partridges and plum pudding.

"The space around the fountain will be used for public events and the seats can be used for people to sit and enjoy the activities taking place."

The regeneration of the town includes the relocated Duncan Edwards and restoration of the Earl of Dudley statue.

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Two days departing March 5



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From Jack the Ripper and the Great Train Robbery, to the Millennium Dome diamond heist and the Glasgow airport terrorist attack, Crime Scene Uncovered reveals the human stories behind the actions, and gives an insight into how such crimes were solved along with the advances in detection and criminal justice.

Among the many items on display, highlights include: memoirs of Donald Swanson, the senior officer on the Jack the Ripper investigation in the late 1800's; masks used by the Stratton brothers, the first criminals to be convicted based on fingerprint evidence; personal possessions of Ronnie Biggs, the Kray twins and other criminals, plus early counterfeiting and forgery implements.

A visit is also included to the Household Cavalry Museum, located in Horse Guards, one of the city's most historic buildings. This offers a behind the scenes look at the work that goes into the ceremonial and armoured reconnaissance role of HM The Queen's mounted bodyguard.

INFO

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
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- Entrance to the Household Cavalry Museum
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The Vaccines

Wolverhampton gig
preview – Page 31



Dara O'Briain

Page 31



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The Real Thing



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Fri, Sat, Sun, times vary
New Alex, B'ham
This tour by Britain's Got Talent winners Diversity will see the dance group performing exclusively choreographed routines based on their ITV special.
Visit www.atgtickets.com

Bill Bailey



Wed, Thu, 7pm
Civic Hall, W'ton
The gap between how we imagine our lives to be and how they really are is the subject of Bill's new show Limboland which hits Wolverhampton next week.
Visit www.wolvescivic.co.uk

Thea Gilmore



Wednesday, 8pm
Wulfrun Hall, W'ton
Thea Gilmore released her latest album Ghosts & Graffiti in May and so far it has proved to be the biggest selling album of her 15 album long career.
Visit www.wolvescivic.co.uk

POP & ROCK

The Whispers
Mon - Tue at 8pm - 12am, £30 - £35
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

The Real Thing
Sat at 7.30pm, £23.50 - £25
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Thea Gilmore
Wed at 8pm, £24.75 - £30.25
Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Reverend And The Makers
Mon at 7pm, £14
Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Sabbotage: Black Sabbath Tribute
Sun at 1pm, £8 - £12
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Nitin Sawhney
Wed at 7pm, £23.50
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Les McKeown's Bay City Rollers
Thu at 8.45pm, £19.50 - £21
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Fidlar
Sun at 7pm, £15.50
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Dressed To Kill: KISS Tribute
Fri at 7.30pm, £12 - £14
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Jimmy Buckley
Sun at 7.30pm, £20
Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE. Call 01543 578762

Will Young: Love Revolution
Mon at 7.30pm, £35 - £45
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Frank Turner And The Sleeping Souls
Wed at 7pm, £25
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

The Vaccines
Tue at 7pm, £25
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Kelly Clarkson
Sat at 6pm, £30.20 - £40.20
Genting Arena, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

The Straight Aces
Sat at 12am,
Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB. Call 01384 374410

Everything Everything
Sat at 7pm, £17.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Cherie Currie
Tue at 8.30pm, £15
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

The ELO Experience: ELO Tribute
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Hiddens Charms
Thu at 7pm - 10pm,
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel
Tue at 7.30pm, £36
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Black Volvo
Fri - Sat at 8pm - 1am,
The Boars Head, Kidderminster, DY10 1EW. Call 01562 861870

Buddy Holly And The Crickets
Fri at 7.30pm, £17.50
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

UK Salutes Frank: Frank Sinatra Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

Barry Steele: Roy Orbison Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm,
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

The Jellycats
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The Quireboys
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Sat at 7.30pm, £8
The River Rooms, Stourbridge, DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

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Starring Sweet, Mud 2 And The Rubettes 2015
Fri at 8pm - 10pm, £32.50
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Queen Extravaganza: 40th Anniversary Of A Night At The Opera
Mon at 8pm - 10.30pm, £24.50
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Are You Experienced?: Jimi Hendrix Tribute
Fri at 10pm, £3 - £5
The Grapes, Stafford, ST16 2HZ. Call 07989 174631

JAZZ & BLUES

Chris Aldridge And Beebe
Tue at 8pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU. Call 0121 200 3030

BabaJack
Fri at 7.45pm, £10 - £12
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

Blind Boy Paxton
Mon at 7.30pm - 10.30pm,
Kitchen Garden Cafe, King's Heath, Birmingham, B14 7SA. Call 0121 443 4725

Adrian Styles and The Giants
Sun at 9pm, Free
The Grapes, Stafford, ST16 2HZ. Call 07989 174631

FOLK & ACOUSTIC

Foster And Allen
Sat at 7.30pm,
Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE. Call 01543 578762

Steeleye Span
Thu at 7.30pm, £19.50 - £22.50
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Open Mic Night
Mon at 8.30pm, Free
Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 3TB. Call 01384 374410

Country Music Night
Sun at 8.15pm, £2
The Swan With 2 necks Longdon, WS15 4PN

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

Maria Schneider Orchestra
Thu at 8pm, £10 - £25
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Nick Ross Orchestra: Sounds Of The Glenn Miller Era
Sun at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

Central England Ensemble
Sun at 7pm,
Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University, B3 3HG. Call 0121 331 5901

CBSO 2015-16: Tchaikovsky's Fourth
Wed at 2.15pm, £12.50 - £43
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Spectacular Classics
Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £16.50 - £44.50
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

The RAF In Concert 2015
Sun at 7.30pm, £19 - £25
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Welsh National Opera: Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street
Thu at 7.15pm, from £11.50
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Welsh National Opera: Orlando
Wed at 7.15pm, from £11.50
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Welsh National Opera: I Puritani
Tue at 7.15pm, from £11.50
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

THEATRE

Diversity
Fri at 7pm, Sat at 1pm, 7pm, Sun at 1pm,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

Shakespeare Schools Festival 2015
Mon at 7pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

Contained
Thu at 7.30pm,
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE. Call 01902 321321

Old Haunts
Fri at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

Glorilla
Sat at 7.30pm,
Artrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ. Call 01527 577330

The Lion The Witch And The Wardrobe
Thu at 7pm, £7.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Calamity Jane: Redditch Operatic Society
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm,
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

The Holy & Horny Farewell Tour
Sat at 7.30pm, £10.50 - £12.50
Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. Call 01902 572090

Last Night A DJ Saved My Life
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm, £17 - £54.14
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

The Little Match Girl
Sat at 2pm, 7pm, £8 - £12
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Hairspray: Bilston Operatic Company
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £8.50 - £19
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Dark And Lovely
Fri at 8pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 8pm, £10 - £13
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

COMEDY

Sean McLoughlin: Whatever It Takes
Tue at 8pm, £11
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ. 0870 320 7000

Roy Chubby Brown
Sat at 7.30pm, £20 - £21
Kidderminster Town Hall, DY10 1DB. 01562 732158

Dara O Briain: Crowd Ticker
Fri at 8pm - 10pm, Sat at 8pm - 10pm, £23
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Hardeep Singh Kohli: Big Mouth Strikes Again
Sat at 8pm, £13 - £14
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH. Call 0121 446 3232

Pam Ann: Queen Of The Sky
Thu at 8pm - 10pm, £24.90 - £30.90
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

Bill Bailey: Limboland
Wed at 7pm, Thu at 7pm, £25 - £28.82
Wolverhampton Civic Hall, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Comedy 42
Sat at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

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Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Vaccines ready to rock the Civic

MILLION record selling rockers The Vaccines kick-off their biggest UK tour to date with a gig at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Tuesday.

The indie band from London released their third album, *English Graffiti*, in May and have recently released *Give Me A Sign* as a single accompanied by a video inspired by spoof rock documentary *Spinal Tap*.

The outfit fronted by Southampton-born singer and guitarist Justin Young have toured the world with The Rolling Stones, Muse, Arctic Monkeys and Red Hot Chili Peppers, and performed at several major festivals over the summer including Glastonbury, Latitude and T in the Park. This week they are touring Australian stadia with Mumford And Sons.

Turn up early to catch Lambeth's raucous Palma Violets, who should get the Civic warmed up nicely.

Other gigs worth braving the November chill for: Liverpool's Cast are back with a new song *Baby Blue Eyes* and a gig for Britpop connoisseurs at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms on Saturday. That's the same night inspired English art pop outfit Everything Everything, featuring the rapid-fire vocals of Jonathan Higgs, are at Brum's O2 Academy.

Former Public Image Ltd bassist Jah Wobble brings his *Invaders Of The Heart* to the Robin 2 in Bilston tonight (Thu). The same venue hosts Brit soul legends The Real Thing on Saturday, former members of Captain Beefheart's The Magic Band on Monday and on Tuesday Cherie Currie from US punk legends The Run-



The Vaccines with Palma Violets could be a gig of the year contender

aways. The Cherry Bomb singer is coming to the Black Country venue as part of her first UK tour in 35 years.

And a heads-up to the Tartan Army of 50something former teenyboppers, Les McKeown brings his Bay City Rollers to the Robin 2 next Thursday, November 19, for a night of Shang-

A-Lang and Bye Bye Baby. More 70s sensations — drummer Roger Taylor's Queen extravaganza marks 40 years since *A Night At The Opera* with a sold out gig at Birmingham Town Hall on Monday and Steve Harley brings *Cockney Rebel* to Symphony Hall on Tuesday.



'It's like walking a tightrope'

Brainy O'Briain is never boring

DARA O'Briain may have become a household name through *Mock The Week*, *The Apprentice: You're Fired!* and *Star Gazing Live*, but there's nothing he loves more than being in theatres to perform stand-up.

"The other day, I sat in an empty theatre thinking, 'I just love these rooms'. I'm on the board of the Theatres Trust to protect these wonderful buildings. I adore these places. It still gives me such a thrill to walk on stage. When you arrive at an empty theatre, the potential is immense. When the show starts and you hear those waves of laughter in the auditorium, it's a huge rush."

Though his show has toured the UK, when it reaches Birmingham, anything could happen: "I love the fact that you can shape the entire evening by thinking on your feet. It's like walking a tightrope."

A former maths and physics student at Dublin's prestigious Trinity University, Dara mixes comedy with science. He interviewed Professor Stephen Hawking this year. "His biggest regret was not being able to physically play with his children when they were little. I was happy that he was prepared to be that honest with me. I suppose when you're choosing your words as carefully as he does, why waste them on waffle?"

"It's great to tackle subjects that are more thought-provoking, but I have this dread that people will go 'Oh Dara's show - there'll be some bit where he bores us with some science thing'. Hopefully by then they're unable to talk because I have beaten them over the head with so much humour."

Dara O'Briain is at Birmingham Hippodrome tonight (Thu), tomorrow and Saturday.

Hoff on his way with 1980s musical

TV legend David Hasselhoff will arrive in Wolverhampton next week as part of the world premiere tour of a new musical.

The former *Baywatch* and *Knight Rider* star will be appearing in *Last Night A DJ Saved My Life* from Tuesday to Saturday, November 21, at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

The production opened in Blackpool last month and audiences in Wolverhampton will be among the first to see The Hoff plays Ross, a hedonist DJ who does not realise the disco era is over. While trying to keep up with a younger girlfriend played by Hollyoaks star Kim Tiddy, matters are complicated by the arrival of his teenage daughter.

Gershwin, Brel and Tchaikovsky

THE John Wilson Orchestra are on course to sell out their celebration of the musical genius of George Gershwin at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, tonight (Thu). Movie music maestro Wilson will present Gershwin's greatest hits in sumptuous original film orchestrations.

The music of France will be performed in the CBSO's Friday Night Classics concert *La vie en rose*, featuring tributes to Edith Piaf and Jacques Brel. Guest singers at Symphony Hall will include Graham Bickley. Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony and Beethoven's Violin Concerto, with Alina Ibragimova, feature in Wednesday's 2.15pm concert.

Opera is bringing musical madness

MADNESS descends upon Birmingham Hippodrome next week when Welsh National Opera's autumn season takes mental turmoil as its theme.

WNO explore Madness with a new production of Bellini's *I puritani* on Tuesday, which charts the heroine Elvira's mental disintegration. Linda Richardson sings Elvira and celebrated bel canto tenor Barry Banks sings Arturo.

Handel's *Orlando* is performed on Wednesday with musical virtuosity as a metaphor for insanity. Countertenor Lawrence Zazzo is in the lead role and the opera is relocated to London during the Blitz.

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View of the tree-lined La Rambla from Sants Montjuïc



The Sagrada Familia, a large Roman Catholic church



Debbie stayed at the Barceló Sants hotel

The futuristic tower, Sants Montjuic

Father-daughter time is out of this world in super sci-fi hotel

A FAMILY holiday by the sea – a typical British summer pastime. But a mini break with dad when you're in your late 40s and he's late 60s?

My father and I can argue until blue in the face – but a love of sunshine, good food, a bit of architecture, and quite a lot of alcohol. I've sort of inherited from him.

Barcelona it is then. Dad declares it one of his favourite cities and has been there many times.

We're staying at Barceló Sants – a glass box of a hotel, a 20 minute train hop from the city's El Prat airport. The huge hotel is perched on top of the city's main railway station in the Sants district, a couple of miles from the historic centre, but surrounded by an abundance of shops and tavernas. The entrance to the recently-re-

By Debbie Bennett

furnished Barceló Sants is out of this world. Welcome aboard the 'space hotel' with its curved automatic glass doors, a circular internet hub, and giant images from sci-fi films high up beyond a wide staircase and gravity-defying mezzanine floor to the Orbital rooms and suites.

Our lovely twin room on the seventh floor overlooks the bustling district below. The restaurant too has a science theme, divided into three areas, the Oxygen buffet, the a-la-carte Hydrogen and chilled-out Nitrogen cafe.

Dad and I have booked three nights in sci-fi splendour, but head out into the warm July evening, exploring Sants. We chance upon the best paella we've ever tasted and guzzle sangria, before heading back to the hotel's Orbital bar, followed by some seri-

ous cyber sleep. Our two full days in heat-wave-hit Barcelona consist of exploring the sights, both on foot and on the fantastic Barcelona Bus Turistic. These sightseeing buses cover three routes, including the city's architecture-packed centre, taking in Antoni Gaudí's organic-style modernism masterpieces including Casa Milà and the still-unfinished Sagrada Família.

One bus takes us on a route unfamiliar even to dad. It's a delightful ascent along cool winding streets to the Sants Montjuïc district where stops along the way give panoramic views of the city below, including its centrepiece – the famous tree-lined La Rambla, and the imposing mountains beyond. Parts of Sants Montjuïc were created for the city's hosting of the Olympics in 1992. The stadiums, tracks and pools are still in use, guarded over by a sinuous futuristic 136m telecommunications tower. The

bus continues on down to the port where the blue Med glistens and pristine cruise ships wait in the harbour.

Dad and I have booked a little boat trip to escape the searing heat. The sightseeing bus stops near the small harbour of Port Olimpic where we meet David, our skipper for a couple of hours. Our vessel is a simple sailboat which holds no more than six people and the three of us have it all to ourselves. We head out to sea for about half a mile while David gives us a potted history of the city and of himself.

I get to swim, and dad gets to be captain before David serves up olives and Cava in between steering us back to port.

We crammed quite a lot into two days. We didn't get to visit all that Barcelona is famous for, but our galactic hotel, mini off-shore adventure and that father-daughter time made sure it was truly memorable.

[illegible]

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<div></div> <div>David Gilmour: Wider Horizons (BBC2, 9.45pm) Not everybody wants to spend their entire lives doing one profession or activity. Even if you happen to be very good at something, and perhaps universally acclaimed for it, it can be useful to take a little time out to recharge your batteries or try a new pastime. It seems that David Gilmour has been doing just that for the past nine years. That's how long the former Pink Floyd guitarist was out of the music business before returning with his fourth solo album, Rattle That Lock, which was released in September; a tour to promote it is currently under way. This documentary examines Gilmour's life and career, and he's on hand to give candid insights into the key events that have shaped him.</div>	<div>6.00 Breakfast. 9.15 Saturday Kitchen Live. 10.45 The Lord Mayor's Show. 12.10 Football Focus. 12.45 Rugby League. England v New Zealand (Kick-off 1.00pm). 3.10 Formula 1: The Brazilian Grand Prix - Qualifying. The battle for pole at Interlagos in Sao Paulo (Start-time 4.00pm). 5.20 Children in Need 2015: The Best Bits. 6.30 BBC News. 6.40 Regional Programming. 6.50 Strictly Come Dancing. The nine couples step out onto the dance floor once again as the pro-celebrity dance competition draws closer to its finale. As ever, the stars are hoping to impress judges Len Goodman, Darcey Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood - as well as viewers at home - with the carefully plotted routines they have been working on throughout the week. However, there is added pressure this evening, as not only will winning over the panel help the competitors secure a place in the next round, but it will also provide them with a chance to dance at the celebrated Blackpool Tower Ballroom next weekend. 8.15 Doctor Who. Video recovered from the wreckage of Le Verrier Space Station details how the Doctor and Clara became entangled in a deadly rescue mission. With Reece Shearsmith. 9.00 Casualty. A violent altercation at the ambulance station, forces Alicia to treat a patient in the back of a van, and Jacob turns vigilante as he tracks the police officer who shot him. 9.50 The National Lottery Live. Adil Ray, creator and star of Citizen Khan, joins Gaby Roslin for the all-important draws at Lottery HQ. 10.00 BBC News. Weather. 10.20 MOTD Special: David Beckham's Match for Children. Highlights of UNICEF's "match for children" at Old Trafford, which saw David Beckham captain a Great Britain and Ireland XI versus a Rest of the World team led by Zinedine Zidane; National Lottery Update. 11.00 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (2003) Swashbuckling fantasy adventure, starring Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom. 1.10 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.15 BBC News.</div>	<div>6.15 Film: Henry VIII and His Six Wives. (1972) 8.15 Formula 1: Brazilian Grand Prix - Practice One. 10.05 Formula 1: Brazilian Grand Prix - Practice Two. 11.55 F1 Rewind - Great Results. 12.55 Live Formula 1: Brazilian Grand Prix - Practice Three. Coverage from Interlagos. 2.05 Film: The Red Shoes. (1948) Powell and Pressburger's drama, starring Moira Shearer. 4.15 Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip. (R) 4.45 Escape to the Country. (R) 5.30 Pog It! (R) 6.30 The Great Pottery Throw Down. In Stoke-on-Trent, nine potters have to make decorative hand basins, as well as add a surface design to plain tiles for judges Kate Malone and Keith Bryner Jones. They are also challenged to throw the tallest cylinder they can while blindfolded. Sara Cox presents. (R) 7.30 Great Continental Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo embarks on a Greek odyssey from the Athens port of Piraeus, north to the city of Thessaloniki, exploring the Acropolis and sampling moussaka and baklava. (R) 8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring is determined that all his men should be well-shod and have battle-worthy feet, so he starts a regimen involving lengthy route marches. (R) 9.00 Qi XL. Stephen Fry invites David Mitchell, Sue Perkins and Sami Shah to join regular panellist Alan Davies as he meanders about some places that start with the letter M. 9.45 David Gilmour: Wider Horizons. Documentary offering an intimate portrait of the former Pink Floyd guitarist, as he returns to his solo career after a nine-year break with the release of his fourth album, Rattle that Lock, and an accompanying world tour. The film provides insights into Gilmour's professional and personal life, as he muses on the events that have shaped him as both a person and a musician. 11.00 Film: The Last Station. (2009) The private secretary to the ageing Tolstoy is caught up in the conflict over who owns the writer's legacy. Period drama, with James McAvoy, Christopher Plummer and Helen Mirren. 12.45 Film: Sergeant Rutledge. (1960) 2.30 This is BBC Two.</div>	<div>6.00 CITV: Bottom Knockers Street. 6.10 Bottom Knockers Street. (R) 6.25 Bottom Knockers Street. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.50 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 7.05 Oddbods. (R) 7.10 Sooty. (R) 7.25 Super 4. (R) 7.40 Adventure Time. 8.00 Marvel Avengers Assemble. 8.30 Thunderbirds Are Go. 9.00 Jessie. 9.25 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 10.20 Countrywise. (R) 10.50 ITV News: Weather. 10.55 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) 11.50 Downton Abbey. (R) 1.25 Judge Rinder. (R) 2.20 All Star Family Fortunes. (R) 3.05 Doc Martin. (R) 4.05 Film: Scooby-Doo. (2002) Live-action comedy adventure, starring Sarah Michelle Gellar. 5.45 Regional Programme: Weather. 6.00 ITV News: Weather. 6.15 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking contestants Annwen Davies, Jamie Walker and Leah Clements guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. 7.00 The Chase: Celebrity Special. Dr Christian Jessen, JB Gill, Helen Lederer and Stephen Hendry join forces to take on the Chaser and secure a cash prize for charity. Presented by Bradley Walsh. 8.00 The X Factor. The number of hopefuls continues to dwindle as more acts are eliminated from the contest. Tonight, Caroline Flack and Olly Murs present as the remaining contestants face their third live show, in which they must once again demonstrate their talent to judges Simon Cowell, Cheryl Fernandez-Versini, Nick Grimshaw and Rita Ora, in the hopes of surviving another round. 9.45 The Jonathan Ross Show. Real Madrid footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, actress, model and singer Adele, and former Doctor Who star David Tennant join Jonathan in the studio. 10.50 ITV News: Weather. 11.10 Euro 2016 Play-Off Highlights. Richard Henwood presents action from the first-leg matches, including Bosnia-Herzegovina v Republic of Ireland at Bilino Polje Stadium. 11.55 River Monsters. Jeremy Wade visits tourist hot spots in America. (R) 12.20 Jackpot247. 3.00 Show Me the Telly. (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen.</div>	<div>6.15 How I Met Your Mother. (R) 6.40 How I Met Your Mother. (R) 7.05 How I Met Your Mother. (R) 7.30 River Rat Race Stockton. 7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.30 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 9.00 The Morning Line. 10.00 Frasier. (R) 10.30 Frasier. (R) 11.00 The Big Bang Theory. 11.30 The Big Bang Theory. 12.00 The Big Bang Theory. 12.30 The Simpsons. (R) 1.00 The Simpsons. (R) 1.30 Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Cheltenham and Wetherby. 4.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 4.25 Come Dine with Me. (R) 5.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 5.30 Come Dine with Me. (R) 6.05 Come Dine with Me. Chris Sheppard hosts the final dinner party in Worcestershire, impressing his guests with his home-made sweet chilli sauce and potato towers before the winner is announced. (R) 6.30 Channel 4 News. 7.00 The Restoration Man. Inexperienced developer Gareth Williams seeks help from George Clarke as he works to convert a disused Victorian church in Llanelli, Pembrokeshire. With a tight budget that forces him to buy supplies from an online auction site, and a huge amount of red tape resulting from the surrounding graveyard, the stress begins to take its toll on the builder's family. (R) 8.00 Grand Designs. Kevin returns to north Cornwall to see one of his favourite Grand Designs, and discover whether Rebecca Sturrock and Gregory Kewish have been successful with their ambitious plans. (R) 9.00 Film: The Inbetweeners 2. (2014) Premiere. Awkward teenagers Will, Simon and Neil find university life does not live up to their expectations, and are insanely jealous of Jay's stories of his gap year in Australia. Heading Down Under to meet their friend, they inevitably discover he has exaggerated his escapades. Comedy sequel, starring Simon Bird, James Buckley, Joe Thomas and Blake Harrison. 10.55 Film: American Reunion. (2012) Comedy sequel to the American Pie movies, with Jason Biggs and Alyson Hannigan. 1.05 Fargo. (R) 2.00 Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) 2.55 Hollyoaks. (R) 5.05 Deal or No Deal: Double Trouble: Siblings Special. (R) 5.50 Food Unwrapped. (R)</div>	<div>6.00 Milkshake! 9.00 The Saturday Show. 11.00 Film: Defending Santa. (2013) Festive drama, starring Dean Cain. 12.50 Film: Trading Christmas. (2011) Romantic comedy, starring Faith Ford and Gil Bellows. 2.35 Film: Farewell Mr Kringle. (2010) Christmas drama, with Christine Taylor. 4.20 Film: Dear Santa. (2011) Romantic comedy, starring Amy Acker and David Haydn-Jones. 5.05 5 News Weekend. 6.10 Film: Kelly's Heroes. (1970) A rebellious American soldier fighting in occupied France learns from a captive German officer the whereabouts of a fortune in Nazi gold. Recruiting the aid of three fellow soldiers, he puts together a daring plan to penetrate enemy lines to get their hands on the bullion. Second World War adventure, starring Clint Eastwood, Telly Savalas, Donald Sutherland, Don Rickles and Harry Dean Stanton. Edited for language. 9.00 Football Live Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's top matches, including Gillingham v Bury at Priestfield Stadium and Rochdale v Wigan Athletic at Spotland in League One. Plus, a round-up of the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers. 10.00 Live Championship Boxing. Nick Blackwell v Elliott Matthews. Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the bout for the British Middleweight title, which takes place at the City Academy in Bristol. 12.00 Ben Fogle: New Lives in the UK. Ben Fogle meets people who have escaped the rat race for a more rewarding life elsewhere in the UK, beginning with a London family who moved to rural Devon. (R) 12.55 The Gadget Show. Jon looks at the world of 3D printing, Oris struggles through a gore-filled maze of zombies, and Jason delves in the world of future gaming at Abertay University in Dundee. (R) 1.50 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and live chat from the presenting team. 3.10 Shark Attack: Feeding Frenzy. An unusually aggressive shark in Florida. (R) 4.00 Big, Bigger, Biggest: The Tallest Towers. The Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur. (R) 4.50 Make It Big. (R) 5.45 Angels of Jarm. (R)</div>	<div>BBC Three 7.00 Don't Tell the Bride 8.00 Top Gear 9.00 Film: Blades of Glory (2007) 10.30 Russell Howard's Good News 11.00 Family Guy 1.15 Josh 1.45 The Fear 2.15 Together 3.45 Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth 4.00 Close BBC Four 7.00 Lost Land of the Tiger 8.00 Horizon: The Core 9.00 Arne Dahl 11.00 Rod Stewart at the BBC 12.00 Rod Stewart Live at Hyde Park 1.00 Top of the Pops 1977: Big Hits 2.00 Singer-Songwriters at the BBC 3.00 Lost Land of the Tiger 4.00 Close ITV2 11.15 Tricked 12.15 Scorpion 1.15 I'm a Celeb: Junglicious Moments 2.15 Funnist Ever You've Been Framed! 3.15 You've Been Framed! 3.50 Celebrity Catchphrase 4.50 Film: Nim's Island (2008) 6.45 Film: Kindergarten Cop (1990) 9.00 Film: 2 Fast 2 Furious (2003) 11.10 Celebrity Juice 11.55 Release the Hounds 1.00 Tricked 1.55 Crazy Beaches 2.15 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records 2.30 Animal Practice 2.55 Teleshopping 5.55 ITV2 Nightscreen ITV3 12.45 A Touch of Frost 2.50 Agatha Christie's Marple 4.50 Film: Columbo: Troubled Waters (1975) 6.55 Doc Martin 8.00 Midsomer Murders 10.00 Lewis 12.05 A Touch of Frost 2.00 ITV3 Nightscreen 3.30 Teleshopping ITV4 12.10 World Rally Championship Highlights 12.45 Snooker: Champion of Champions Live. Day five from the Ricoh Arena, Coventry. 5.15 Pawn Stars 5.45 Storage Wars: Texas 6.45 Snooker: Champion of Champions Live. 11.15 Film: Death Race (2008) 1.25 The Big Fish Off 2.30 Nitro Circus 2.55 ITV4 Nightscreen 3.00 Teleshopping E4 11.35 The Goldbergs 12.30 Melissa & Joey 1.30 How I Met Your Mother 2.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine 3.00 The Goldbergs 4.00 Film: The Spy Next Door (2010) 6.00 The Big Bang Theory 9.00 Film: Transporter 3 (2008) 11.05 The Inbetweeners Top 10 Moments 12.05 Gogglebox 2.15 The Inbetweeners 3.10 The IT Crowd 4.05 How I Met Your Mother 4.25 Revenge 5.10 Rules of Engagement Film4 11.00 My Neighbour Totoro (1988) 1.00 St Trinian's (2007) 3.00 Scrooged (1988) 5.00 Catch That Kid (2004) 6.45 Starman (1984) 9.00 Legion (2010) 11.00 Machete Kills (2013) 1.10 Shaolin Soccer (2001) 3.30 Close</div>

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CHOICE



Monty Don

The Secret History of the British Garden (BBC2, 9pm)

With Alan Titchmarsh seemingly concentrating on ITV and Channel 4 projects these days, Monty Don is now the go-to man for the Beeb's gardening programmes. His latest series – broadcast in four parts – examines how British horticultural havens have changed during the past 400 years. He begins by hopping back in time to the 17th century, something that proves to be quite easy – the garden at Levens Hall in Cumbria, where Don kicks off his tour, is the only one in the country that has barely changed since the 1600s. But, thanks to archaeological evidence and a photograph taken by a Luftwaffe pilot, he also unearths evidence of a lost garden and a hidden message.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 8.20 MOTD Special: David Beckham's Match for Children. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **1.45** Songs of Praise. **2.20** The Hunt. (R) **3.20** Formula 1: Brazilian Grand Prix. (R) **3.00** BBC News. **6.10** **Regional Programme.** **6.20** **Countryfile.** Ellie Harrison reports on new farming developments in Frome, Somerset and samples some of the local produce. Plus, a look back at some memorable moments from past series. Including Weather For The Week Ahead. **7.20** **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman present the results of last night's show, before the two lowest scoring couples compete in a dance-off to avoid elimination from the contest. **8.00** **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents the show from Walmer castle, Kent, where finds include a rare pottery piglet, a revolving table with secret compartments, and a British PoW's diary. **9.00** **The Hunt.** The challenges predators face finding and catching prey in a forest, featuring footage of tigers, pine martens, sparrowhawks, eagles and chimpanzees. Narrated by David Attenborough. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** **Regional Programme.** **10.30** **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Agnes tries to persuade the health visitor Grandad is in need of respite care – so she can go on holiday – and receives ominous news from beyond the grave from her late husband. (R) **11.00** **Room 101 – Extra Storage.** Frank Skinner invites comedienne Sue Perkins. Strictly Come Dancing judge Bruno Tonioli and TV host Steve Jones to discuss their pet hates. Last in the series. (R) **11.40** **The Apprentice.** The candidates travel to a south London builder's yard, where Lord Sugar challenges them to set up and run and handyman business with the winning team generating the most money. (R) **12.40** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** The Big Allotment Challenge. (R) **8.00** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** An Island Parish: Falklands. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Simply Nigella. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** My Life on a Plate. (R) **1.00** Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip. (R) **1.30** Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip. (R) **2.00** Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals. **5.00** Demolition: The Wrecking Crew. (R) **6.00** **Are Our Kids Tough Enough? Chinese School.** Five teachers from China take over the education of 50 teenagers in a Hampshire school to see whether the Chinese education system can work in the UK. (R) **7.00** **Caribbean with Simon Reeve.** Simon visits Nicaragua and Honduras on the last leg of his journey, before finishing by spending time with young Jamaicans who have rejected gang life. Last in the series. (R) **8.00** **Earth's Wildest Waters: The Big Fish.** Ben Fogle takes the three finalists to Zambia for the last challenge, where they must fish on the river Zambezi, competing for a catch with the local wildlife. Last in the series. **9.00** **The Secret History of the British Garden.** New series. Monty Don examines how British gardens have changed over time. The first episode focuses on the 17th century, with a visit to the only surviving garden from the 1600s. **10.00** **Family Guy.** Peter prepares for a fight with Liam Neeson, while Lois becomes a class helper and pays more attention to the other children than she does to Stevie. **10.25** **Family Guy.** Peter, Quagmire and Joe take a trip to Canada on a private jet, which crashes into the wilderness. Stranded in the wilderness for two months, Peter becomes feral. **10.45** **Family Guy.** Stevie's beloved teddy bear Rupert gets recalled, and he will stop at nothing to get him back. **11.05** **Film: Cosmopolis.** (2012) A billionaire driving across Manhattan has a series of strange encounters as he faces financial ruin. David Cronenberg's drama, with Robert Pattinson and Juliette Binoche. **12.50** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.45** Holy City. (R) **2.45** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Sined Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **8.30** Fish Hooks. **9.00** Horrible Science. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **1.30** River Monsters. (R) **2.00** Catchphrase. (R) **2.45** The X Factor. (R) **4.30** The Nation's Favourite Beatles Number One. (R) **6.30** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.45** **ITV News;** Weather. **7.00** **Jekyll and Hyde.** Robert tries to find a cure for Maggie's condition, which leads Garson to make a discovery about the Jekyll curse. Dance makes Robert a tempting offer in return for his help. **8.00** **The X Factor.** Caroline Flack and Olly Murs reveal the results of last night's live show, before the two lowest scoring contestants compete in a sing-off to decide who gets eliminated. **9.00** **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** New series. Ant and Dec present the celebrity survival challenge, which returns for a 15th series. Another batch of famous faces are packed off to the Australian jungle, although the unlucky contestants have not been identified at the time of going to press. There could be an unpleasant surprise in store for them this time, as the grueling tasks get started as soon as they arrive. The first episode will give viewers the chance to vote for who must face the first of this year's stomach-churning Bushucker Trials. **10.50** **ITV News;** Weather. **11.10** **Off Their Rockers.** Mo embraces modern fashion, Tony reveals a saucy secret and Royston shares his strange inventions, as the irreverent hidden-camera show continues. (R) **11.40** **The Chase.** Bradley Walsh presents as four contestants work as a team to take on ruthless quiz genius the Chaser. (R) **12.35** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.05** Chasing Perfection. **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Punch. **12.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Cheltenham. **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30** Film: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. (2010) Fantasy adventure, with George Henley and Skandar Keynes. **5.40** Channel 4 News. **6.00** **Small Animal Hospital.** One-off episode in which John Barrowman reports on a black Labrador who collapsed suddenly, a cocker spaniel with a potentially fatal disease, and a terrier with cancer of the jaw. **7.00** **Restoring Britain's Landmarks.** The restoration of St Edward's Presbytery begins, a Grade I masterpiece which was designed and owned by architect Augustus Pugin. Alastair Dick-Cleland oversees the recreation of an oriel window which was destroyed in the 1950s, while at Belmont House, John Evetts calls upon craftspeople to ensure it is ready for its first paying guests. Plus, Anna Keay learns about the secret technique which holds Astley Castle together. (R) **8.00** **Million Pound Mega Yachts.** Documentary about the Monaco Yacht Show, in which over 100 of the largest yachts on the water are up for sale, with billionaire buyers competing to own the most extravagant vessels. **9.00** **Homeland.** Saul decides to order a sweep at the station. Meanwhile, a beleaguered Carrie looks to During for some much-needed support. Thriller following a team of CIA agents, starring Claire Danes and Mandy Patinkin. **10.05** **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. Narrated by Carolyn Aherne. (R) **11.10** **Film: Man on a Ledger.** (2012) An escaped convict threatens to jump from a skyscraper, while his brother carries out a plan of his own in the ensuing chases. Thriller, starring Sam Worthington and Jamie Bell. **1.10** Grand Designs Australia. **2.05** Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.55** Hugh's 3 Good Things: Best Bites. (R) **5.05** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Ticky Toc. (R) **6.55** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Foorbar and Custard Too. (R) **7.15** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.25** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.40** Little Princess. (R) **7.55** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.05** Blaze and the Monster Machines. **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **9.00** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.35** Football League Tonight. (R) **11.35** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.35** Film: My Santa. (2013) Drama, starring Samaira Armstrong. **2.15** Film: A Fairytale Christmas. (2013) Romantic drama, starring C Thomas Howell and Haylie Duff. **4.00** Film: The Christmas Secret. (2014) Drama, starring Bethany Joy Lenz. **5.40** Film: Christmas with the Kranks. (2004) Festive comedy, starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Tim Allen. **7.30** **5 News Weekend.** **7.35** **Funnies Fails, Falls & Flops.** Comedy clip show featuring pranks gone wrong, unwise acts and failed attempts of misplaced ambition. **8.00** **Impractical Jokers UK.** The guys teach a karate class, pose as newspaper reporters, steal from people's shopping baskets and take a massage chair into the street to offer free neck and head rubs. **8.30** **Impractical Jokers UK.** The guys steal food from customers' plates in a restaurant and try to teach languages they cannot speak. **9.00** **Film: Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters.** (2013) The fairytale brother and sister grow up to be renowned witch hunters, using advanced weaponry to battle the supernatural. Their latest case leads to an encounter with a powerful sorceress. Fantasy adventure, with Gemma Arterton and Jeremy Renner. **10.45** **Film: Killer Elite.** (2011) A former secret agent takes on one last mission to save his mentor, but assassins are sent to stop him. Action thriller, starring Jason Statham, Clive Owen and Robert De Niro. **12.50** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **1.15** SuperCasing. **3.10** Eamonn & Ruth: How the Other Half Lives. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Formula 1: Brazilian Grand Prix Highlights **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News **9.30** Film: Kidulthood (2005) **11.05** Family Guy **11.50** American Dad! **12.15** Family Guy **12.35** Rent a Cop **1.05** The Rise of Female Violence **2.00** Russell Howard's Good News **2.30** Together **4.00** Close **BBC Four** **7.00** The Fairytale Castles of King Ludwig II with Dan Cruickshank **8.00** Mark Lawson Talks to David Hare **9.00** On Stage: Live from Television Centre **11.00** Blood and Gutter: 70 Years of the Citizens Theatre **12.00** Lost Land of the Tiger **1.00** Full Throttle: The Glory Days of British Motorbikes **2.00** Plastic: How It Works **3.00** Mark Lawson Talks to David Hare **4.00** Close **ITV2** **11.05** The X Factor **12.55** I'm a Celeb: Stars of Oz **2.00** I'm a Celeb: Epic Trials **3.00** Film: A Cinderella Story (2004) **4.55** Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) **7.10** Film: Bean (1997) **9.00** The Xtra Factor **10.05** Funnist Ever You've Been Framed **10.50** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Now! **11.55** Film: Almost Married (2014) **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **11.40** Wycliffe **12.50** Film: Columbo: Troubled Waters (1975) **2.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.55** Midsomer Murders **6.55** Sunday Night at the Palladium **7.55** By Royal Appointment **9.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **11.00** Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) **2.40** Wycliffe **3.35** Movies Now **3.40** ITV3 Nightscreen **4.00** Emmerdale **ITV4** **11.15** MotoGP Highlights **12.15** World Rally Championship Highlights **12.45** Snooker: Champion of Champions Live **5.15** Pawn Stars **5.45** Storage Wars **6.45** Snooker: Champion of Champions Live **11.15** Film: Mickey Blue Eyes (1999) **1.20** Jimmy White: Sports Life Stories **2.25** Nitro Circus **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **12.35** Film: Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **2.30** Couples Come Dine with Me **4.35** Rude (ish) Tube Shorts **4.50** The Big Bang Theory **7.15** Film: Men in Black II (2002) **9.00** The Big Bang Theory **10.10** The Inbetweeners **11.10** The IT Crowd **12.15** First Dates **1.20** Drifters **1.50** Cheating Gum **2.20** Rules of Engagement **3.00** How I Met Your Mother **3.20** Hollyoaks **Film4** **11.00** Anastasia (1997) **1.00** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **3.05** Napoleon Dynamite (2004) **4.55** Big (1988) **7.00** Run Fat Boy Run (2007) **9.00** Independence Day (1996) **11.45** The X Files: I Want to Believe (2008) **1.50** Down to the Bone (2004) **4.00** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Meet the Parents, BBC1, 10.45pm
A male nurse delays proposing to his girlfriend until he has won the approval of her strict father, a former CIA agent who does not suffer fools gladly, and vows to be on his best behaviour during a visit to her family home. However, his efforts to impress soon collapse into a catalogue of disasters. Comedy, starring Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson. (2000)

TUESDAY
The Invisible, BBC1, 12.05am
A teenager attacked and left for dead is left hovering between life and death, and tries to persuade his assailant to confess. Thriller, with Justin Chatwin and Marcia Gay Harden. (2007)

WEDNESDAY
Oranges and Sunshine, BBC1, 11.35pm
A social worker discovers that, over several decades, thousands of British children have been falsely informed their parents are dead and been forcibly sent to care homes in Australia, where they suffered terrible abuse. She devotes herself to exposing the scandal and helping the victims to find their families. Fact-based drama, with Emily Watson. (2010)



Meet the Parents, Monday, BBC1, 10.45pm

THURSDAY
The Wild Geese, Channel 5, 10pm
A corporation hoping to bring about the downfall of an African dictator hires a group of British mercenaries to free a political prisoner dangerous to the regime. However, when the company changes its plans and makes a deal with the tyrant, the soldiers and the man they have saved are left surrounded by hostile military forces with no escape route. Action adventure, starring Richard Burton and Roger Moore. (1978)

FRIDAY
The Eiger Sanction, ITV, 11.15pm
An art professor who once worked as an assassin is blackmailed into returning to his old career to eliminate a spy. However, his target is in the middle of a mountaineering expedition, forcing the hitman to embark on a perilous climb up the Eiger in hot pursuit. Action adventure, directed by and starring Clint Eastwood. With George Kennedy. (1975)

Celebrities get ready to face their fears

The dark nights are drawing in, and most of us would love the chance to get away for a few weeks, leave the autumn chill behind and find some sunshine.

So how does a fortnight in the Australian jungle sound?

Actually, second thoughts – don't go there!

As well as the bugs, snakes and other creepy crawlies, you will most likely bump into some highly-strung reality TV stars arguing over a grain of rice or eating fish eyes seasoned with termites.

Yes, it's that time of year again folks, so hold on to your cork hats as I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! is back and promising to be as good as, if not better, than ever.

If the rumours are to be believed, this year is going to be even tougher for the stars.

A whole host of new Bushtucker trials have been revealed, including Sun Scream, which involves contestants smearing gruesome concoctions, including bugs and fish guts, over each others' skin.

And then there are sheep's testicles to deal with. This trial apparently works like a normal limbo, but as the celebrities bend under the cane, they have to have 10 sheep testicles dangled in their mouths.

The food in the eating challenges has apparently stepped up a notch as well, with dishes of the day including duck feet, cow lips, bush pig semen, camel penis porridge, boiled sheep testicles and rat tail soup.

It may only feel like only yesterday that Gemma Collins was crying mascara stained tears while complaining of contracting malaria and Carl Fogarty was being crowned King of the Jungle.

However, the rumour mill has gone into overdrive, as members of the public (and bookies) attempt to guess who will fly out to the Land of Oz.

Labour MP Simon Danczuk, athlete Iwan Thomas, TV chef Rustie Lee, choreographer Brian Friedman, X Factor reject Chloe Mafia, Emmerdale actress Gemma Oaten, and TV personality and retired athlete Caitlyn Jenner (formerly Bruce Jenner) are

some of the names being banded about.

It has also been reported by one newspaper that Watchdog and The Weakest Link host Anne Robinson has been offered £750,000 to take part, while glamour model Katie Price, who has already appeared twice on the ITV show, in 2004 and 2009, is fancied to make it a jungle hat-trick.

But arguably the most interesting name rumoured to be making an appearance is... Paul Gascoigne.

Gazza is one of the finest footballers this country has ever produced, but has more recently tended to hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons, mainly due to his battle with the bottle and turbulent love life.

Two stars who definitely won't be eating witchetty grubs this year though are Gazza's fellow Geordies Ant and Dec, who quickly shot down any rumours that they would become contestants for the first time.

Dec replied to a fan on Twitter with the words Absolutely NO chance. Zero. Zip. Nada. None. Nope. Stop it."



I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!, Sunday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Simply Nigella BBC2, 8.30pm
Food writer Nigella Lawson demonstrates dishes that combine the comfort of the familiar with the excitement of the new, including fluffy oat pancakes drizzled with a raspberry and honey syrup. She offers a twist on a classic Caesar salad for a light lunch idea, and rustles up a Greek-inspired supper for friends including squid and orzo pasta, and a sweet and savoury version of a cheesecake. Nigella's simple rice bowl with ginger, radish and avocado celebrates a few choice ingredients and results in a dish that's uplifting to look at, as well as to eat.

TUESDAY
Live International Football ITV, 7.30pm
England v France (Kick-off 8.00pm). Coverage of the friendly encounter at Wembley Stadium, as the Three Lions take on the hosts of next year's European Championship. Roy Hodgson's men came through an admittedly favourable qualifying group with 10 wins out of 10 – the only country to finish with a 100 per cent record. The French didn't need to qualify for the tournament, so they will see this match as an important step toward their

preparations for the summer. Head coach Didier Deschamps captained the team that won the trophy in 2000, two years after lifting the World Cup on home soil, and his already legendary status could be cemented if he leads the current squad to victory at the Stade de France in July. Mark Pougatch presents, with analysis from Paul Scholes, Lee Dixon and Ian Wright.

WEDNESDAY
Toast of London Channel 4, 10.30pm
New series. Live on chat show Lorriane, Steven tells a tale that could topple the US government and destroy the entire world, while Jane tries to evade the men in black. Plus, Toast is overcome with a debilitating bout of stage fright when he discovers an outdoor performance of The Scottish Play, directed by acclaimed theatrical director Peggy Plywood, will be broadcast live on ITV. Although Ed and Mrs P are on hand to help, it may take someone with more gusto to shake him out of it. Matt Berry stars.



Doctor in the House, Thursday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY
Doctor in the House BBC1, 9pm
New series. Families worried about their health invite a GP to move in and investigate their lives in the hope he can transform their lifestyles and ensure their future wellbeing. First up is 48-year-old working mother Priti, who is struggling with stress, headaches, weight gain and disrupted sleep. Dr Rangan Chatterjee moves in to monitor the situation – and soon realises it is actually her partner, 49-year-old Sandeep, whose health is more at risk. The doctor draws up a plan of lifestyle changes, before they are measured on how much of an impact the resident medic has had on their health.

Ben Fogle: New Lives in the UK Channel 5, 9pm
Ben Fogle meets people who have escaped the rat race for a more

rewarding life elsewhere in the UK. This week he travels to Wales to meet 61-year-old Emma Orbach, who abandoned 'modern' Britain, her family home and even her marriage to live in a mud hut deep in the countryside, where she spurns all forms of technology and convenience. Unfortunately, her hut burned down last year, so Ben helps build a new one while also helping to collect wood, washing in the river and enjoying her only luxury – a home-made sauna.

FRIDAY
Adele at the BBC BBC1, 8.30pm
Much of the narrative surrounding the launch of Adele's latest single, Hello, has focused on her use of a hilariously outdated flip-phone in the accompanying video. However the fact that there is such a narrative is testament to the singer-songwriter's popularity. Do you think anyone other than his network provider cares what phone Steve Brookstein uses? Yes, with Hello dialling in first-week sales of 333,000 (A three-year UK record), the Tottenham songstress is a big deal. This special one-off performance, then, which sees her take the stage with her full band as well as chatting to host Graham Norton, is well worth catching – especially since it's her first television performance since February 2013.

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CHRONICLE

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Codeword

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LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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1. Crucial examination for detective force appearing in a trial (4,4)
5. Got back a classical piece of attire (4)
9. More than one mischievous maker is sure to offend the politician (4)
10. Try a seal for old time's sake (4,4)
11. A publication for the family (5)
12. Steelworks discovered near the railway (7)
13. Fails to keep calm and gets axed (5,4)
18. Being warlike, I fired in army manoeuvre (8)
19. A style on holiday (4)
20. One isn't upset by stress (7)
21. See 2 Down
22. Did artistic work and proved an attraction (4)
23. Dreadfully enraged by eastern apostate (8)

- 2 & 21Ac. Makes an appearance, as the moth invariably does (5.2.5)
3. Being positioned in the wrong side will produce argument (7)
4. It provides an opening for employees (5,8)
6. Description of late train should have been settled (7)
7. Equipped for an attack, we hear (7)
8. Bends down, we hear, for the water vessels (6)
13. Restricted cover round small child (7)
14. Lack of sound selenic arrangements (7)
15. First offence against the church becomes prevalent (4.2)
16. Being informed about judicial proceedings (7)
17. In a wicked setting she is put to shame (7)

1	2	3		4		5	6	7
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1. Tip (8)
5. Expensive (4)
9. Too (4)
10. Haughty (8)
11. Greater (5)
12. Excursionist (7)
13. Somersaulting (4,4,5)
18. Pastoral (8)
19. Select (4)
20. Toil (7)
21. Intended (5)
22. Notch (4)
23. Helped (8)

2. Set free (7)
3. Double (3-4)
4. Reverse fortunes (4,3,6)
6. Pattern (7)
7. Profits (7)
8. Refinement (6)
13. Encourage (7)
14. Antiquated (7)
15. Painful experience (6)
16. Utter (7)
17. Authorise (7)

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5	2	9	7	4	3	8	6
1	6	4	8	2	5	3	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Pawned; 4 Coffer; 9 All for nothing; 10 Extreme; 11 Occur; 12 Board; 14 Penny; 18 MIGHT; 19 Replica; 21 After a fashion; 22 Refuse; 23 Meander. **Down:** 1 Places; 2 Well thought of; 3 Erode; 5 Outcome; 6 Fair condition; 7 Regard; 8 Andes; 13 Reports; 15 Impair; 16 Drift; 17 Banner; 20 Paste. **QUICK - Across:** 1 Repeat; 4 Morass; 9 Unrepresented; 10 Dangled; 11 Atone; 12 Shape; 14 Merit; 18 Enter; 19 Travel; 21 Incarceration; 22 Delays; 23 Recess. **Down:** 1 Rounds; 2 Par-enthetical; 3 Appal; 5 Overawe; 6 Authoritative; 7 Sudden; 8 Ready; 13 Portray; 15 Behind; 16 Steer; 17 Flanks; 20 Awake.

1. How many U.S. presidents have been called Adams?
2. Who wrote Love and Mr. Lewisham?
3. In what year was the Turner wing in the London Tate Gallery opened?
4. Between what years was the Spanish Civil War fought?
5. What was the seventh month of the Old Roman calendar?
6. What is a John Dory?
7. What is ambergris?
8. What is the atomic number of carbon?
9. Who do you associate with the phrase 'Cogito, ergo sum'?
10. What was William Cody better known as?

762123 gives a sailor,
435238 gives a child,
5998123 gives a servant.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Niner: FACTORIES



Also enjoy some free time in London for shopping or sightseeing in the theatre district where the shops, market stalls and eateries of Covent Garden are just a short walk away, and the famous stores on Oxford Street and Regent Street are close by too.

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This holiday starts in Georgia and sweeps through the world of legends; WC Handy, Robert Johnson, 'Fats' Domino, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline and Dolly Parton.

Soak up the atmosphere of one of the most exuberant places on the face of the planet, New Orleans, the fabled 'Big Easy'. Take the opportunity to truly experience New Orleans on an optional city tour, including the famous French Quarter of time-warped, iron-balconied buildings centred on Jackson Square and the neighbouring colourful Tremé district.

For a glimpse of the city's surrounding countryside and a taste of Creole life, join the optional Louisiana swampland excursion.

Visit the 'Cotton State' of Mississippi, and journey to Tupelo, home of the house into which Elvis was born (*entrance fees payable locally*).

Continue on to Elvis' beloved hometown of Memphis, which will forever be linked with 'The King'. An optional excursion here takes in the Elvis Presley Boulevard to visit Graceland, the King's home, last recording studio and final resting place.

Enjoy a change of musical genres and journey east from the world of rhythm and blues to Nashville, capital of country music for a two night stay.

Here an optional excursion will introduce you to the legendary Studio B - home to the country music hall of fame and the famous Ryman Auditorium. And visit Chattanooga of Choo-Choo fame, a quintessential southern trading town, surrounded by a steep plateau.



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- Return flights
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* Variable according to departure dates -please go to website for latest prices and availability

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Plenty of parking available at semi-detached house



AN IMPRESSIVE semi-detached residence with spacious accommodation in Wolverhampton Road, Dudley, lies a popular residential area.

It is for sale through Skitts at a new price of £199,950.

A short distance from Sedgley centre and only around three miles from Wolverhampton city centre, this property has a porch, entrance hall with original coloured glass front door, Minton floor tiling and stairs off, living room, dining room, sitting room with timber fireplace, kitchen and utility.

Bedroom one is en suite, there are two further bedrooms and a bathroom.

There is a rear garden and parking for numerous vehicles.

For further information contact Skitts on 01902 686868 or go online to visit www.skitts.net website.



This four-bedroom Pedmore residence has impressive gardens

SUBSTANTIAL family residence, 14 Bell Meadow, Pedmore, near Stourbridge, was built in 1988 by Billingham & Kite Limited, it is for sale through The Lee Shaw Partnership at £645,000.

It has an impressive reception hall, a galleried landing, cloakroom/WC, lounge with a hand-carved marble fire surround, dining room with feature fire surround, conservatory, breakfast kitchen with granite worktops and integrated appliances and there is also a utility.

Upstairs the master bedroom has fitted furniture and its en suite has a corner bath and separate shower, while the bathroom has a bath and shower. There are three further bedrooms.

The garage has an electric door and the impressive garden includes a substantial patio, pergola and sunken garden.

The rear garden has a tree-lined backdrop and the driveway provides parking for a number of vehicles.

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PENN COMMON, Sedgley Road

Gas centrally heated, double glazed Edwardian Cottage that has been tremendously renovated & with many period features on periphery of conservation area. Enjoying a secluded rear garden & with extensive parking and TWO GARAGES, the property includes hallway, dining room, sitting room, kitchen with Range, pantry. Three bedrooms, bathroom. Boiler room, store, expertly tendered gardens. EPC: TBA. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £300,000



GORNAL WOOD, Himley Road

SPACIOUS, gas centrally heated, double glazed, FOUR DOUBLE BEDROOM (two en-suite) detached imaginatively planned to a contemporary design comprising; hall, cloakroom, dining room, 17'8" lounge, kitchen. Second bedroom with shower room en suite, Two further double bedrooms, bathroom, and to Second floor a bedroom suite with a range of fitted units & shower room en suite. Garage. garden. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £249,950



KINGSWINFORD, Park Street

Within Kingswinford's highly sought after 'Old Quarter', this INCREDIBLY DECEPTIVE, ENLARGED NOW EXCEPTIONALLY SPACIOUS AND EXPENSIVELY IMPROVED, VICTORIAN MID TERRACED FAMILY HOME offers a very generous, beautifully appointed layout, enhanced by a LOFT CONVERSION and including FOUR EXCELLENT SIZED BEDROOMS, plus a large attractive garden. EPC E

£209,950



LOWER GORNAL, Sandstone Close

SCANDANAVIAN STYLE. Gas centrally heated, double glazed detached family home constructed to first quality specification & in exemplary order. Designed to match adjacent property with minimal energy/running costs the accommodation includes; hall, cloakroom, lounge, 19ft 'hub of the house' dining kitchen, garden room. Three bedrooms, bathroom. garden, GARAGE (rear), additional parking. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £189,950



DUDLEY, Belvoir Close, Milking Bank

ENLARGED, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached set in quiet 'backwater' in popular district. Block paved driveway and accommodation provides; hall, lounge, dining room opening through to UPVC CONSERVATORY, store, kitchen, vestibule/computer section, flexible 'family room' (alternative teenagers room/dining room/bedroom etc). Three bedrooms, bathroom. garden. EPC: TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £180,000



UPPER GORNAL, Hill Street

EXTRA PARKING! A conscientiously maintained freehold gas centrally heated (UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED detached with DISTANT OPEN VIEWS in favoured district and no upward chain. Porch, hall, fitted cloakroom, lounge, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms (one with shower en suite), bathroom, garage, extensive parking to front, secluded garden. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £175,000



LOWER GORNAL, Summer Lane

A delightful conscientiously maintained freehold gas centrally heated and primarily UPVC double glazed DETACHED with further potential and NO UPWARD CHAIN. Accommodation includes hall, lounge, breakfast kitchen. Three generous bedrooms, upgraded bathroom, integral 19ft garage, neat garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £170,000



NETHERTON, Saltwells Road

A FANTASTIC opportunity to purchase a MOST IMPRESSIVE, EXTENDED, DOUBLE FRONTED, DETACHED HOME comprising: Porch, Hall, TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, Kitchen, Utility, TWO DOUBLE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Bathroom, Driveway, Garage, LARGE GARDEN. EPC D

£169,950



SEDGLEY, Brownswall Road, Brownswall estate

Attractive gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed semi detached in highly favoured district convenient. Superb accommodation includes entrance porch, reception hall, lounge with bay, transverse upgraded and enlarged 'hub of the house' dining kitchen with updated units and various appliances. Three generous bedrooms, upgraded bathroom. Lengthy 22'5" garage, secluded level rear garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £163,500

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Dudley Chronicle
Thursday, November 12, 2015



COSELEY, Breen Rydding Drive

OUTSTANDING gas centrally heated, UPVC double glazed semi detached accommodation provides hall, lounge, 17'3" dining kitchen with patio doors, pantry, utility room, fitted cloak room. Three good bedrooms (two with fitted wardrobes), reappointed bathroom. Garage, neat gardens. EPC Rating D. SEDGLEY



BRIERLEY HILL, Henzel Croft

THIS BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED & SPACIOUS, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Hall, Guests W.C, Lounge, Modern Kitchen, Two First Floor Bedrooms, Bathroom, TOP FLOOR MASTER BEDROOM with DRESSING AREA & EN-SUITE OFF; LOVELY REAR GARDEN, Garage. EPC C



WOODSETTON, Park Close

Attractive, Freehold, gas centrally heated, mostly uPVC double glazed semi detached at head of short cul-de-sac briefly comprising: entrance porch, hall, lounge with bay, dining room, kitchen. Three bedrooms, tiled bathroom. Parking, secluded rear garden with substantial timber workroom. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £160,000

£157,500

Offers in the region of £150,000



WOODSETTON, Woodsetton Close

A fantastically presented and superbly maintained semi-detached property located on a sought after cul-de-sac, situated in the popular area of Woodsetton. This family home benefits from upvc double glazing, gas central heating, THREE BEDROOMS, living room, kitchen-diner, family bathroom, garage, driveway to front and attractive enclosed rear garden. EPC: C. SEDGLEY



WOLVERHAMPTON, Waverley Crescent, Ettingshall Park

A conscientiously maintained, gas centrally heated, uPVC double glazed, extended Three Bedroom Semi-Detached house benefiting from well-appointed lounge, extended dining room, good-sized modern kitchen, 31' tandem garage, family bathroom, driveway and enclosed rear garden. Viewing Essential. EPC: D. SEDGLEY



WOODSETTON, Chartwell Close

An attractive significantly improved conscientiously maintained gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed semi detached in short convenient cul de sac. Superb (recently redecorated throughout) stylish accommodation includes hallway, 15ft lounge, dining room (with patio doors), kitchen, large pantry, three generous bedrooms, tiled bathroom with white suite, garage, delightful neat well tended garden. EPC: E. SEDGLEY



COSELEY, Maslin Drive, Hurst Hill

Gas centrally heated & uPVC double glazed detached bungalow in quiet secluded location. Accommodation includes: entrance hallway, living/dining room, kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS, shower room. Driveway & parking, brick garage, garden. SEDGLEY EPC: D.



WOODSETTON, Parkes Lane

EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached comprising: hallway lounge, dining room, kitchen, Three bedrooms, bathroom, Garage (sub-divided to form store & utility room with toilet off). Garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £149,950

Offers in the region of £149,950

Offers in the Region of £149,000

Offers in the Region of £147,000

Offers in the region of £145,950



PENSNETT, Broad Street

A VERY DECEPTIVE MODERN DETACHED FAMILY HOME which is BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED enjoying a DRIVEWAY and GARAGE plus LARGE REAR GARDEN, a superb setting enhancing the SPACIOUS and RECENTLY REDECORATED layout, with THREE GOOD BEDROOMS. EPC D



BROCKMOOR, Pensnett Road

THIS TRADITIONAL, BAY-FRONTED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Porch, Hall, Sitting Room, Dining room, Conservatory, Guests W.C, Kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS, Bathroom, Additional W.C, Driveway, Garage / Workshop & Garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN! EPC:



Brierley Hill, Roach Close

THIS RATHER LOVELY SEMI-DETACHED HOME would make a PERFECT FIRST TIME BUY or ASTUTE BUY-TO-LET INVESTMENT and comprises: Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Conservatory, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Driveway and Secluded Rear Garden. EPC E Large Garden. EPC:



QUARRY BANK, White City Road

THIS SPACIOUS & EXTENDED, THREE BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED HOME incorporates a UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED & GAS CENTRALLY HEATED LAYOUT & comprises: Hall, TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, Extended Kitchen, Guests W.C, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom & Large Garden. EPC:



PENSNETT, Albert Street

THIS BEAUTIFULLY MAINTAINED & THOUGHTFULLY IMPROVED, TWO BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Pleasant Lounge, BREAKFAST KITCHEN, TWO FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Modern Well Appointed Bathroom, Pleasant Garden & VERSATILE LOFT SPACE. EPC:

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SEDGLEY, Sandyfields Road

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Three-bedroomed semi for offers over £95,000



THIS three-bedroomed semi-detached house in Lower Valley Road, Brierley Hill, is for sale through Your Move at offers over £95,000.

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To the first floor the landing gives access to three bedrooms.

Externally there is a garden to the rear. The property benefits from majority double glazing and gas central heating.

For further information contact Your Move on 01384 455000 or visit the agents website www.your-move.co.uk



Terraced home could be an ideal opportunity for a first-time buyer

THIS intermediate terraced house in a convenient location in Nimmings Road, Halesowen, is an ideal first-time or investor buy. It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £94,950.

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The kitchen has an oven and hob, door to the rear garden and tiled flooring, two bedrooms (one with a period fireplace), and a bathroom.

For further information contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 5856667 or see the www.hickshadley.com website.



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Stability a key to success

By John Griffiths

Three wheels on my wagon . . . and I'm rolling along quite happily, thank you.

Piaggio's MP3, a range of three-wheeled scooters with 300 or 500cc four-stroke engines, attracts many a curious glance because it is an unusual sight on our roads.

Perhaps that's because we're not so scooter-orientated here as our cousins on the continent, where they make up quite a proportion of city traffic. In fact, it's Europe's biggest seller.

Why? Well for a start it can be ridden on a standard car licence, because it falls in the same class as a Reliant Robin, and for those coming from the world of four wheelers it's rather less daunting than an ordinary, 13in wheel two-wheeled scooter because of its inherent stability.

It's also cheap enough to run (80mpg plus and £38 a year VED) and, crucially, it's narrow enough to filter through traffic jams like a conventional bike, unlike some of the more familiar trikes with two wheels at the rear.

Then there's that very clever tilting front end developed by Piaggio which has a number of dynamic advantages.

The MP3 feels more stable over bumpy roads than a two-wheeled scooter, and corners like a conventional bike - capable of some pretty extreme lean angles limited mainly by the risk of grounding the centre stand's foot lever.

It looks strange if you're watching someone else tackling a bend, but perfectly natural if you're in the saddle.

Meanwhile the steering/suspension system ensures both front wheels stay in contact with the road. That, by its nature, means additional grip which also comes into play when you're braking, and the MP3 has discs on all three wheels so braking is sure and stable.

Just as the MP3 was the first three-wheeled scooter, these new models are the first to come with anti-lock brakes and traction control which prevent the single, powered rear wheel from slipping in the wet. The new disc brakes are bigger, too, for a little extra stopping power.

The 300 has a conventional 'twist and go' transmission

with centrifugal clutch and continuously variable transmission which does dampen its acceleration performance a little but makes urban riding effortless. But on the open road it will reach 70mph in short order and sit there quite happily on a dual carriageway.

The four-stroke engine turns out 23.1bhp and 24.3Nm of torque and is liquid cooled: the machine itself is so quiet you can hear the hum of the cooling fan if you're stuck in slow traffic.

The extra stability provided by the third wheel was, for me, particularly welcome at slow speeds around town which is where this MP3 is expected to spend much of its life. Clue - its called the 'Yourban'.

Balanced

The twin suspension can be locked into the upright position by means of a switch on the right handlebar. This means the MP3 can be parked without using the centre stand, and it has a handbrake too. I did use the stand, though (I always prefer the belt and braces approach) especially as the machine is surprising well balanced so only requires a little foot pressure on the stand lever.

Some riders use the same system at traffic lights and junctions so they don't have to put a foot down (the lock is automatically released as you open the throttle to move off). However the subconscious side of my brain which is conditioned to riding two-wheelers proved difficult to overcome on relatively short acquaintance with the MP3.

Regular scooter riders will appreciate the weather protection afforded by the tall front shield, and on top of that there's a new height-adjustable windshield.

The seat is sumptuous and beautifully shaped for comfort for both the rider and pillion passenger. Underneath, there's a 50 litre 'boot' capable of taking two full-face helmets, and it's even equipped with a light and 12-volt power socket. One of the optional extras is a dedicated multimedia system which allows you to link a smartphone to the Piaggio's electronics, to provide comprehensive trip information as well as a satnav system.

The MP3 also has a pull-out bag hook, plus a draw with USB connection designed for keeping your phone charged. There are two versions of the Yourban, the 'Business' and



the test bike, the 'Sport' which appeared well put together and trimmed with chrome and high gloss black plastic.

Bigger five-spoke alloy wheels (up from 12 to 13in) and LED daytime running lights are part of the complete cosmetic redesign for the new models, as are the new handlebars and the full set of modern electronic instruments: speedo, rev counter, clock and trip computer and, usefully, an ice alarm.

Also new are the anti-impact pads in front of the rider's knees, plus a parcel holder and grab handles for the pillion rider at the rear.

At £6,134 for the 300cc Yourban, the MP3 isn't cheap compared to some rival commuter transport such as, for example, a 250cc bike or more conventional maxi scooter.

But, when it invented those clever forks and suspension of the tilting front end, Piaggio created a whole new market sector. These new models go further along that road, with the addition of disc brakes, traction control and ABS, plus decent luggage capacity and comprehensive instruments.

I'm not sure about experienced bikers, but the highest card in its winning hand is its confidence-inspiring extra stability and ease of use over conventional rivals. This has clearly proved to be the deciding factor for the 150,000 Europeans - the majority probably car drivers - who have switched to a cheaper, quicker form of commuter transport.

It's as different to a conventional bike as it is to a car, but for non-riders contemplating buying one I'd advise a few hours passing your CBT would be well spent.

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Take a shine to special Mazda2

By John Griffiths

Mazda is hoping buyers who want to stand out from the crowd will take a shine to a new special edition of its supermini.

The £15,395 Mazda2 Sport Black is based on the standard 1.5-litre petrol version of the car, but with special paintwork and trim, plus a range of options for further personalisation.

Based on the top specification SE-L Nav version, the new models get stand-out front and side skirts, plus a roof spoiler in 'brilliant black' to contrast with the 'soul red' metallic or 'snowflake white' pearlescent paint schemes.

The Sport Black gets a chromed exhaust tailpipe trim, gunmetal alloy wheels, rear privacy glass, rear parking sensors and automatic headlights and wipers.

There are also optional decal graphics and contrasting door mirror colours.

The special edition is designed to broaden the appeal of the Mazda2, which has already won a number of awards – including 'car of the year' in the Influential Car Dealer Power awards.

There are 11 petrol and four diesel variants in the range at prices from £11,995 to £17,995.

The new Mazda2 was launched earlier this year to critical acclaim, because of its equipment, space and driving characteristics.

Interior

It is longer than its predecessor, but with shorter overhangs which allowed the engineers to make a significant increase in interior space.

The Sport Black's 1.5-litre engine turns out 90PS of power, which (on official figures) is capable of averaging almost 63mpg and a low, tax-busting 105g/km of CO₂ emissions. It's 0 to 62mph sprint time is a nifty 9.8 seconds.

It's the middle of the three petrol versions in power terms, as well as near the middle of the range in price terms, so an obvious candidate for the sporty styling aimed at adding buyer appeal and, perhaps, broadening the customer base.

If the performance and economy figures are an impressive combination, it's down to Mazda's SKYACTIV technology now used in all its vehicles. It consists of new and more efficient engines combined with significant weight-saving, including the use of stronger yet lighter materials in the body and chassis.

Secondary effects are lower noise levels and sharper handling. Combined with revised power steering it makes the Mazda2 a fun, confidence-inspired car that's also quiet and refined.

The new car has significantly more headroom, with extra shoulder room for the driver and front passenger, too.

The cabin is trimmed with higher quality materials, with a new seven-inch touch screen dominating the centre of the dash for audio, communications and satnav functions.

The boot, too has grown: now 280 litres which can be increased to an impressive 950 litres if the split/fold rear seats are folded down.

Apart from the Sport Black styling extras, the car comes with a high level of equipment including fog lights, privacy glass, automatic headlights and wipers, rear parking sensors, a multimedia system including CD stereo with integrated Bluetooth, navigation system, smart city brake and lane departure warning, as well as the standard safety package including multiple airbags and stability control.

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Well-priced and quality make SUV a great buy

By Sharon Walters

It's not all that long ago that marques such as Kia were seen as the cheap and not always necessarily cheerful option – well at least in the likes of my generation!

Now nothing could be further from the truth. Kia produces well-built, stylish, reasonably priced vehicles that have one of the best warranty systems around.

Things started to change for the company in the late 1990s and began in earnest in 2006 with a design-led revolution following the appointment of Peter Schreyer as chief design officer. That was the start of Phase I of Kia's move away from being primarily focused on value. And now we are in Phase II which is seeing Kia match and surpass not only customer expectations but also the world's best car marques for engineering, technology, refinement and quality.

One car that has gone through these changes is the Kia Sorento which first appeared in 2002 as the brand's first full-size SUV. Now in its third generation, the 4x4 is bigger and better than ever before – as I found out in a week-long road test in which I really put it through its paces.

The entry level at £28,795 comes loaded with standard kit although there's only one engine to choose from, and all cars come with standard four-wheel drive with manual and automatic gearboxes options.

The 2.2-litre version of Kia's R-family turbodiesel engine, which meets EU6 emissions requirements, has plenty of pull with 197bhp and can get from 0 to 60mph in nine seconds with a top speed possible of 124mph. On motorway driving it cruises very comfortably at 70mph with the reassurance of being aware it has that bit of 'extra' if you need to get out of any trouble. And although it's a far-sized car, it copes well with winding rural and pot-holed covered roads. By the way, those are the conditions of the majority of my 25-mile commute to the office each day.

Anticipates

Sorento features the Dynamax all-wheel-drive system first seen in Kia's Sportage. This is an intelligent, electronically controlled all-wheel-drive system which continuously monitors driving conditions and anticipates when all-wheel drive will be needed, rather than simply reacting to changing conditions. Normally it delivers 100 per cent of engine torque to the front wheels, but the torque can be redistributed up to a maximum of 60:40 front-to-rear to enhance cornering stability or if road conditions deteriorate. For off-road driving, owners can manually select lock mode, which gives a 50:50 torque split at speeds of up to 25mph. In the Sorento it is paired with Advanced Traction Cornering Control (ATCC).

There are four trim levels, badged KX-1, KX-2, KX-3 and KX-4. Depending on model, buyers have the choice of six-speed manual or automatic transmission.

All four trim grades have seven seats, now with a 40:20:40 split in the middle row and a 50:50 split in the rear. The third row of seats fold flush into the boot floor, while the second row also folds flat by pulling a handle in the boot and can slide back and forth to accommodate larger passengers in the third row. And it really is easy to fold and move those seats. I loaded my Sorento with friends to gauge the comfort level and even those in the very back said the ride was good and they didn't feel packed in like sardines. Equally I did a trip to a DIY store (not one of my favourite places), put the seats down and found it to be a very good load lugger.

Depending on model, the Sorento features a number of highly advanced new safety and convenience technologies including adaptive smart cruise control to maintain a gap to the vehicle ahead, speed limit information, around-view monitoring, cross traffic alert to prevent the owner from backing out of a parking space into the path of an approaching vehicle, a smart park assist system, lane departure warning with blind spot detection and self-dimming adaptive front lighting.

Extensive standard features include alloy wheels, black side sill and wheel-arch mouldings, roof rails and a rear spoiler, cornering lights integrated into the foglights, LED daytime running lights, front wiper de-icers, electrically-adjustable, folding and heated door mirrors, door sill scuff plates, steering wheel-mounted controls, all-round electric windows and cruise control with speed limiter. Safety is taken care of by electronic stability control, vehicle stability management, trailer assist, ABS with electronic brake force distribution and brake assist, six airbags, active front head-rests, front seat belt pre-tensioners and load limiters and an active bonnet to protect pedestrians.

And if you do want to tow a horsebox or a caravan, Sorento can manage 2,500kg in manual format and 2,000kg in automatic. Now that is excellent and beats a lot of the opposition in its sector.

Sorento also has Kia's industry-leading seven-year, 100,000-mile warranty. You can't do better than the Sorento if you need an SUV.

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MiTo and Giulietta uprated

By James Parker

The Alfa Romeo MiTo and Alfa Romeo Giulietta ranges have both been enhanced by new trim levels. A new Collezione specification is available in both the Alfa Romeo MiTo and Giulietta models, while a new Sprint Speciale version joins the Alfa Romeo Giulietta range.

The Collezione versions are the new luxury flagships of their respective ranges, offering a more luxurious and elegant specification than the sporty QV Line models. In the case of the Alfa Romeo MiTo Collezione, standard equipment includes 17-inch 'Collezione Bronze' alloy wheels with matching bronze-effect door mirrors and satin-effect headlight and tail light surrounds.

The interior is trimmed in special Collezione cloth and eco-leather upholstery, with brown stitching on the flat-bottom steering wheel, gear knob and handbrake gaiter. A split-folding, three-seat rear bench, sports dials, special Collezione vintage floor mats and a Uconnect™ NAV infotainment system with TomTom satellite navigation and DAB radio round out the extremely high specification.

Offered with a choice of a 0.9-litre TwinAir Turbo 105hp or 1.4-litre Turbo Petrol 140hp engines (the latter with Alfa Romeo's six-speed ALFA TCT twin-clutch transmission

and uprated Brembo brakes as standard) the Alfa Romeo MiTo Collezione is priced at £17,660 on-the-road and £19,210 on-the-road respectively.

The Alfa Romeo Giulietta Collezione builds on high specification of the Exclusive trim level but stands out even further from the crowd thanks to its signature gloss-black painted roof with matching door mirrors, front and rear parking sensors and unique, dark-finish, 18-inch multi-spoke alloy wheels.

Leather

Inside, the seats are trimmed in bespoke 'Collezione' leather with heating on the front seats and the luxurious ambience is complemented by a 6.5-inch Uconnect™ NAV system with advanced voice operated satellite navigation with 3D mapping and DAB digital radio as standard.

Prices for the Alfa Romeo Giulietta Collezione start at £24,820 for the 1.4 MultiAir Turbo Petrol 170hp six-speed manual, or £26,245 with the six-speed Alfa TCT twin-clutch transmission.

The diesel Alfa Romeo Giulietta Collezione range starts at £25,680 for the 2.0 JTDM-2 150hp manual, with the 2.0 JTDM-2 175hp ALFA TCT version completing the new Collezione range at £27,840.

Amid all this luxury, Alfa Romeo hasn't forgotten its cuore sportivo, however: A new Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint Speciale also joins the range, building on the specification of the Sprint model to offer ever more performance-oriented equipment. The Sprint Speciale adds sports suspension, 17-inch sports alloy wheels, Brembo brakes, aluminium pedals and Quadrifoglio-style sports seats as standard, along with dual-zone climate



.....
'Collezione versions are the new luxury flagships.'

control, rear parking sensors, special silver dashboard trim, the 'Visibility Pack' and cruise control.

The Sprint Speciale engine range includes the 1.4 TB MultiAir 150hp, priced from £23,320 with a six-speed manual or £24,745 with the six-speed ALFA TCT

(including steering-wheel mounted paddle-shifters).

The Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint Speciale powered by the 2.0 JTDM-2 150hp is priced from £24,180 while the 2.0 JTDM-2 175hp ALFA TCT version is priced from £26,340 on-the-road.

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Pompeii, Capri and the Bay of Naples

Eight days from £739

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On this holiday the choice of hotels are offered in and around the town of Sorrento and excursions include a boat trip to the beautiful island of Capri, home to the famous Blue Grotto; the city of Pompeii, whose state of preservation is astonishing; a visit to the still-active volcano of Vesuvius, and a visit to Naples, home to the Archaeological Museum that houses some of the finest finds from the nearby excavations.

The Amalfi coastline offers stunning views and a full day is spent driving the meandering roads, admiring the exclusive resort of Positano, the picturesque village of Amalfi and then Ravello, perched in its breathtaking location boasting delightful small cafes and the Villa Rufolo, a charming collection of medieval buildings.



Lake Como, St Moritz and the Bernina Express

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Travelling back to Switzerland, Lugano is an eclectic mix of traditional Swiss values and the more laid-back Latin influences from across the border. Explore the cafe-lined main square, the myriad of twisting lanes of the old town or discover the dense network of shops.

Lake Garda, Venice and Verona

Eight days from £619

Lake Garda is an area of outstanding natural beauty and on this holiday there is a selection of hotels to choose from in either Malcesine or Riva del Garda, both of which are beautifully surrounded by lofty peaks and situated at the more scenic north end of the lake.

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Venice is unique and caught in a time warp. Culturally rich as any city can be, see many of the countless places of interest on a guided tour, including St Mark's Square and its Basilica, the Campanile and Doge's Palace — home to the most powerful man in Venice. A trip on a gondola is also a must in this stunning and fascinating city (payable locally).

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Swimmers come back with a haul of medals

TWELVE senior swimmers from Halesowen Swimming Club travelled to the brand new Harvey Hadden Sports Village in Nottingham.

The swimmers were heading for a weekend of competition at this year's ASA Midland Short Course Championships.

Competing against others from the best swimming squads in the region the opposition was always going to be tough, however Halesowen swimmers exceeded expectations and managed to produce some impressive performances in the water.

Josh Bradley, aged 22, produced outstanding performances, getting through to five finals and grabbing a gold medal in the 100m Individual Medley to become the Midland Short Course Champion.

Chloe Finch, 17, who also swims for City of Birmingham Swimming Club, also produced some excellent swims and made two finals, hauling silver in the 200m freestyle and then grabbing a bronze in the 400m Freestyle.

Finch just missed out on the medals when she came 4th in the 800m freestyle.

Other swimmers who battled their way to the finals were Megan Tinsdale, 19, in the 50m freestyle, Mark Laing, 16, in the 50m backstroke and James Cuthbert, 14, in the 50m butterfly who came sixth in the 15 and under age group.

The clubs remaining competing swimmers were Emma Bird, Isabel Bowers, Liley Merrell, Katherine Morrice, Jack Simpson, Ryan Spoor and Callum Tinsdale.

Villa got lucky, says new boss Garde

NEW Villa boss Remi Garde admitted his side got lucky in a backs-to-the-wall draw against Manchester City but maintained: "It's a good start."

The point ended a run of seven straight defeats for Villa but they remain bottom of the Premier League, five points from safety, after Garde's first game in charge.

They have won just once this season – on the opening day at Bournemouth – but the new manager was pleased with the result, despite admitting Villa rode their luck.

Garde rang the changes in his starting line-up dropping Jack Grealish and Joleon Lescott to the bench in favour of Carles Gil and skipper Micah

Richards and Villa looked a more cohesive unit as a result.

He said: "We have been a bit lucky because they touched the bar, we didn't create so many chances, I know that. City were full of confidence, they were brilliant in Sevilla so it's a good point to work on.

"I was not frustrated not to get the three points. I am realistic, we were only threatening sometimes but it's quite a good start.

"We have to believe we can be safe. It will be a tough mission even if we have one more point today. Let's see what happens.

"You have to be lucky but you have to work hard, luck is not coming knocking on your door and saying

'look, I'm here'. You create that, the behaviour you need to get lucky. It would have been very disappointing for us not to get a point if they had scored."

Former Villa midfielder Fabian Delph almost scored a late winner for City after coming on as substitute.

Delph steered a side-footed effort just wide seconds after Fernando's header crashed off the bar as the game drew to a close.

He had been subjected to fierce abuse by the Villa Park crowd on his return after his controversial switch in the summer. Some fans waved inflatable snakes at the former favourite.

Glassboys through from penalty spot

Dover 1 Stourbridge 2
STOURBRIDGE stormed into the FA Cup second round for only the third time in their history as Karl Hawley's second-half penalty secured a thrilling victory at Dover Athletic.

The Glassboys defied the 50 league places separating the two sides to dump the Vanarama National League promotion-chasers out of the competition after the home side were reduced to 10 men in the second half.

Boss Gary Hackett kept faith with the same starting XI that swept aside Dover's league rivals Kidderminster Harriers in the previous round – and they duly delivered again.

Just as against Harriers, Stourbridge stunned their opponents by grabbing an early lead on eight minutes.

Brian Smikle powered his way down the hosts' left flank before teeing up winger Chris Lait to drill his 20-yard effort past Dover keeper Mitch Walker.

Subdued

The goal seemed to spark the subdued home side into life and the Whites went within a whisker of drawing level four minutes later when Ricky Miller fired just wide of Lewis Solly's goal.

The home side continued to crank up the pressure and Miller was guilty of dragging another good opportunity the wrong side of the post from 10 yards.

But the Glassboys' stoic defence was finally breached on 33 minutes when they failed to scramble clear a corner, allowing Aswad Thomas time to pounce and thump the home side level.

Despite being pegged back, Stour continued to make life uncomfortable for Dover with Matt Dodd and Stuart Pierpoint both going close.

But Stour's travelling supporters were almost silenced four minutes before the break as Dover forward Miller shrugged off his marker before blazing his shot over the bar with only Solly to beat.

Stour began the second half as confidently as they had started the first with 'Tom Tonks' powerful drive bringing a smart save out of Walker. Dover wasted another good opportunity as Stour were cut open by Jack Parkinson's through ball,



Dover Athletic goalkeeper Mitch Walker collides with Karl Hawley and concedes a penalty. Photo by Will Kilpatrick.

Ricky Modeste scuffing his shot wide.

The miss proved costly as the game swung in the visitors' favour on 69 minutes. Dover keeper Walker was shown a second yellow after bringing Hawley crashing to the turf in the penalty area.

Hawley brushed himself down before slotting his spot-kick past substitute keeper Andy Rafferty.

The home side rang the changes but rarely threatened an equaliser.

Dover: Walker, Magri, Orlu, Grimes, Raggett, Thomas, Modeste (Ofori-Acheampong 78), Parkinson, Deverdies (Ajala 65), Miller (Rafferty 68), Payne. Subs not used: Kinnear, Murphy, Diallo, Sterling.

Stourbridge: Solly, Green, Scarr, Pierpoint, Smikle, Matt Dodd, Tonks, Broadhurst, Lait, Hawley, Richards. Subs not used: Penny, McPike, Wright, Billingham, Price, Knight, Harris.

Referee: Richard Martin (Somerset).

Evitts heels the need for a winner for Lye Town

Lye Town 1 AFC Wulfrunians 0

A solitary late Kalum Evitts goal gave Lye Town all three Midland Football League Premier points at home to AFC Wulfrunians.

AFC Wulfrunians were unlucky not to come away from a visit to Lye Town with at least a point.

Although Wulfs struggled more than the hosts with the challenging conditions, this was just their third defeat in ten games.

Chances were hard to come by in the first half, Wulfs' John Hill pouncing on a loose ball on the half-hour and seeing his top corner-bound shot clawed away by Jake Bedford.

Bedford excelled again just after the break, tipping away Kyle Minto's effort after the Wulfs man had been played in by Jamie King.

Lye failed to deal with a dangerous corner from Jamie King and Hill pounced on the loose ball, only to see his effort, which looked destined for the top corner, clawed away by Jake Bedford.

Almost immediately after the break, Wulfs had perhaps their best chance of the game.

King played a good ball behind the defence that was latched onto by Kyle Minto, but the striker saw his powerful effort tipped upwards by Bedford.

Ben Jevons was the first to react for the visitors, but he was off-balance as he leapt for a header and his effort flew wide of the empty net.

Lye's first real opportunity came in the 71st minute, Sam Tye cutting in from the right and beating two players before letting fly.

Three minutes from time, Tom Overfield fired in a low cross and Evitts' back-heel found the corner.

Free kick gives Yeltz share of match spoils

Colwyn Bay 1 Halesowen 1

A free-kick from Reece Hales rescued a well-earned point for Halesowen in a 1-1 draw at Colwyn Bay.

The new-look home side went into the Evo-Stik Northern Premier game on a five-match losing run but started well, Yeltz keeper Daniel Platt twice denying John Marsden.

But Colwyn Bay got back on top, Kev Holsgrove's shot deflected for a corner and James Graham heading narrowly wide.

The Yeltz looked to have lost it on 77 minutes when John Marsden's shot on the run from the edge of the area went inside the far post to put the home side ahead.

But Hales stepped up on 84 minutes with a super free-kick by Hales and substitute Jean Michel Gueyes could have won it at the end only to be denied by a tackle from Bell.

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Sport

Villa got lucky,
says new boss

Page 51

Glassboys glory
is spot on

Page 51



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Tipton Town suffer a high five from SC

Tipton Town 0 Wolverhampton SC 5
TIPTON Town suffered a West Midlands Premier lesson at the hands of Wolverhampton Sporting.

The young home side had given a fine showing in midweek, holding Wolverhampton Casuals to a draw, but had no answer to a visiting attack which has now netted 43 goals in 11 games.

Jon Crawford's fine drive in the third minute, fisted over the top by Sporting keeper Luke Stevens, heralded a continuing improvement for Paul Totney's youngsters which was underlined when Gagondeep Singh crashed a header against the bar.

But Sporting picked up the pace and went ahead on 24 minutes, Danny Westwood powering home a header.

Visibly shaken, the home youngsters became easy prey for their more astute adversaries who bagged a second goal two minutes later when Jon Letford drew keeper Callum Whitehouse and stroked the ball home.

Whitehouse saved well and Westwood clipped the bar with a header before the third goal, forced over the line by Nathan Cain following a corner.

Second-half goals from Letford, chipping the keeper, and Westwood, bursting past two tackles before scoring, rounded it off.

Tipton began the second spell on the attack, Gagondeep Singh taking up a highly promising position but tossing his advantage away by firing wildly high and wide.

Back came Sporting, hitting the bar but then netting the fourth when he chipped Whitehouse with aplomb.

Westwood rounded off the scoring, riding two tackles and tucking the ball away.

Bright start but two goals in two minutes sink Tivs

Tivdale 1 Leek Town 2
TWO goals in as many first-half minutes condemned Tivdale to an Evo-Stik Division One South defeat.

They began brightly, Mark Danks' chipping keeper Sheridan Martinez but seeing his effort drift agonisingly wide.

Chris Sterling then played in Chris Rabone, whose shot lacked power.

Two minutes later Sterling played the ball into Chris Rabone but his shot lacked any power and it was comfortably gathered by Martinez.

The visitors then took over, Tim Grice heading against the bar and Niall Maguire then scoring from 20 yards. He unleashed a shot from 20 yards, that although Tivdale keeper Tom Turner got a hand to, he could not keep it out.

Two minutes later though it was two. Chris Baker won the ball in the middle of the park and sent Dan Cope away down the right flank.

Cope then found Grice with a superb cross and the big frontman made no mistake with his header.

On 77 minutes Sterling halved the deficit following Alex Fletcher's through ball, but there was to be no equaliser.

Heathens talk on Monmore lifeline

CRADLEY HEATHENS' hopes of survival have been given a massive shot in the arm.

The club has confirmed they are in talks over a return to Wolverhampton's Monmore Green Stadium which would allow their management team of Chris Van Straaten, Gary Patchett and Nigel Pearson to continue.

The future of the Heathens has been in limbo since the trio confirmed they would not be running the club at Perry Barr next season and they were on the lookout for new management.

However, they have now entered "constructive dialogue" with stadium owners Ladbroke's in an

Speedway

attempt to secure a return to the venue they utilised as their temporary home until a year ago.

A club statement said: "Whilst these talks continue, no further discussions will take place regarding the sale of the club as the management trio would be willing to continue at Monmore Green with the help and support of the Heathens Supporters Trust, Ollie Ommer Children's Club and the loyal group of supporters."

"We would like to thank our fans, riders and sponsors for their patience and hope we can bring

some positive news in the near future." The news comes as a major boost to supporters of the former Dudley Wood outfit, who have endured a turbulent time since losing the use of Monmore Green last year.

Despite securing the use of Perry Barr to remain on track in 2015, they have experienced a difficult season following the switch.

However, director Pearson is encouraged by the possibility of a return to Monmore Green – and he insists they will do all they can to keep the club on track.

"While we cannot promise anything, it's clear both parties are doing all they can," Pearson said.

NO GOAL ZONE FOR WOLVES

Wolves 0 Burnley 0
AFTER the wildly contrasting extremes of performances at St Andrew's and Ashton Gate, here was some sedentary normality at Molineux.

And, in the wake of derision in defeat at Bristol City, a point and a clean sheet against an in-form team which had won nine of the last 12 was not to be sniffed at.

Yes it's wins that Wolves need to climb the table, but in the many contexts you could place this football match, a 0-0 draw was surely a result Kenny Jackett would have taken, especially given the improved performance from his players.

Burnley, aside from a lively opening jaunt or two, during which many home supporters will probably have been fearing the worst, were otherwise stunted by an impressive Wolves rearguard.

In a run of four defeats and one win in six games, Wolves have produced few positives. But looking at their last three, they have conceded just one goal.

Minimum

Importantly, chances are being kept to a minimum too. Even in defeat at Bristol City the hosts failed to create too many of the clear-cut variety.

Mike Williamson has undoubtedly been the catalyst for this. The imposing figure has led by example in his sturdy, no-nonsense actions.

Not just with Williamson, but collectively, gone are the nervous passes out of defence, the poor clearances, the indecisiveness when a ball comes into the box.

A new-found safety first approach may not please the purists, but it's helping steady the Wolves ship, a ship which made a mayday call in conceding four at Derby and three against Middlesbrough.

Already, Williamson has just two games to go before his loan deal expires. Extending that deal should be priority number one for Jackett, Kevin Thelwell and Jez Moxey.

While Kortney Hause and/or Ethan Ebanks-Landell may have returned by the time Williamson is due to head back north, neither



Dominic Iorfa fires in an effort as goal under pressure from two Burnley defenders

youngster yet has the experience, the composure or the nous to deal so assuredly with Championship strikers.

Danny Batth has certainly benefitted from not having to marshal the defence on his own, while Scott Golbourne's continuous improvement can only have been aided by having Williamson next to him.

While the defence took care of itself, it was in attack that Wolves failed to hit the heights.

Getting into promising positions wasn't a problem, due to the reliable midfield pairing of Jack Price and Kevin McDonald who moved the ball with precision.

But too often crosses, as is becoming a recurring theme, were wasted. Benik Afobe, much improved on his last two appearances, generated one chance with his pace and then went closest of all from a Dave Edwards tee-up. And the tireless James Henry also went close from outside the area.

But Wolves lacked the bit of magic, that spark, to unlock the Burnley defence.

In a few years time Sheyi Ojo may be the player to do that, but here he once again disappointed when handed a start.

And Edwards, for all his deeply impressive teamwork, isn't that sort of player.

Runners aim to put mark on division

LAST weekend marked the start of the winter season for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club.

With the men having been relegated to Division 3 this was their opportunity to stamp their authority on the division with 19 runners pulling on the vest.

With all three divisions of the men's Birmingham & District Cross Country League competing together there was plenty of traffic to negotiate over the 10k course covering three laps of Newbold Comyn.

Ben Foster made light of the testing course to claim second place in 37.53 with Rob Meredith in third in 39.59, Matt Biggs in fourth in 40.04 and James Wright in sixth in 41.03 to give the blue hoops a solid foundation.

Richard Bate came home in 21st place in 43.52 and Rob Sannwald crossed the line in 27th in 44.29 to give the A team an impressive table topping lead.

The B team was led home by Dave Norman in 29th, given the same time as the sixth A team counter, Simon Hughes was 37th, Andy Sprague finished in 49th, Simon Blizzard in 58th, Mark Gallimore in 60th, Darren Thompson in 68th giving the B team a very respectable total, a total that would have placed them sixth in the league in their own right.

Mark Homer was 78th, Pete Hood was 89th, Graham Wildgoose was 93rd, Kieran Pitt was 100th, Richard Jones 117th, Richard Tonks 124th and John Sixsmith 148th on his cross country debut.

The ladies covered two laps of the same course, in their West Midlands Womens League opener with Helen Tromans bringing them home in 66th in 28.09.

Glassboys look for another special day

BOSS Gary Hackett is hoping Stourbridge can produce "one more special day" after being drawn at home to Eastleigh in the FA Cup second round.

Having already seen off Kidderminster Harriers and Dover Athletic to reach this stage of the competition, the Glassboys have been handed National League Premier opponents again as they try to reach the third round for the first time ever.

Eastleigh are seventh in non-league's top flight – and beat League One Crewe in the last round.

But Hackett said: "We are at home and we have got an opportunity. I am just hoping for one more special day."

★★★

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